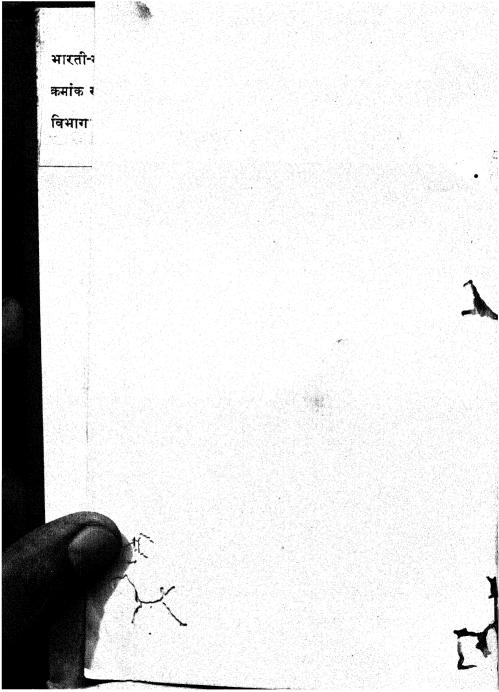
THE POETICAL WORKS OF CLIZABETH BARRETT

WITH INTRODUCTION
BY
ALICE MEYNELL

WARD, LOCK & CO., LIMITED LONDON, MELBOURNE AND TORONTO.



ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

"HER glories shall never fade." Elizabeth Barrett Browning's fruitful genius, her passion for good, her abundance, her nobility, her tenderness, and the strength that was in her impetuous wishes; her sex, her story, her marriage, her public spirit, and her English love of Italy:—all together have made her name perpetual. And as to the quality of those who remember her, the character of the company her memory keeps, the kind of society her fame frequents, no one could wish her a world of readers of her poetry fitter for the woman than is that world which actually does value her labours. It is a world incorrupt all of affections, devoted to truth, and in love-whatever " liberty" may mean—with liberty. None can be constant readers of Mrs. Beining without loyalty of heart, or without sympathy; or without holding steadfastly the inner doctrine of self-sacrifice. None who, in the modern world, have taken the tremendous step of denying that doctrine and of refusing it—an act of the soul that is momentous, and vet taken with small deliberation—will be attached to her poetry or patient with it. Her readers, too, are lovers of art, the more intelligent as they do not stop to divide the art from the substance, as do those who follow the fashion to separate a building from its architecture.

Whatever may ultimately become of the rather belated romance costume pieces and armour pieces—which Mrs. Browning made the subject of a group of her once most popular poems—the poems themselves must long remain fresh because of the humanity with which the author stuffed out those clothes. A knight, a page, the paynims, or a lady and her rival knights, a castle, and a charger—these were not heartless material with her. Not in the sonnets of her own life, nor in the poems on Italy, the emotion of which in a sense cost her life, nor in the spiritual songs of her abundant faith and devotion, is there more vivid or more true feeling than in these imitation romances. Heart and a moral—both alive—are in them all. She seems to have taken a real pleasure in the chivalry and the armour, the pleasure fostered by the times in which she lived. As we too think of anything inaccessible, gloriously coloured and impossible—something remote and Asiatic, for instance, only that Asia is now ransacked like the rest —so a poetess of 1840 thought of the days when men and women were picturesque. A mid-19th-century woman could hardly help but practise the deplorable humility "of not aspiring to be fair," or of not expiring to be pictorial. Her house, her dress, her street, separated her from simplicity and from splendour of living; and, if she was a writer, she wrote of fortunate ladies who were more free, more natural, and more splendid. A very banal literature of romance—prose and verse—was the consequence. Mrs. Browning's fancy was inevitably caught, like that of others, by the helm and the hall, the tower and the vesper bell, the abbess in black and the chatelaine in jewels. She hardly turned the personages of this common drama into very characteristic beings; but she did make their stories live with her own impassioned spiritual life. Nothing ever made her

spirit, her morality, her resolute goodness, flag or falter.

Mrs. Browning's morality was positive. The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and her poetry was almost always violent. Her onset carries the day, and we hardly ask whether there was as much power as violence in the rush, or as much grasp as will. It was by means of one of the poems in which her will was most impetuous that she lent a hand in the carrying of an inestimable social reform in England. "The Cry of the Children " was loud as well as strong, even shrill, perhaps; at any rate it reached all ears; it had its effect. There are few conceivable human sorrows, losses, or afflictions that would not be overabundantly consoled by the consciousness of having done part a such a work as the manumission of the little slaves of the factories and mines. It is not necessary to claim for Mrs. Browning's poem an influence greater than it may have had. To have done something is so much happiness and success that no one need feign that she did all. Her maternal spirit would be overwhelmed by such great offspring: but if she did not do all to save the young unfortunate, she did much. Even now they are not all saved. Her work is not yet finished, but it. is still hers, as far as it is prospering, and will be hers in better times when, by others, it may be better done, because her song will never be forgotten. Among her glories, the glory of this work has become historical. Even those who are so critical as to find the poem somewhat hurried and effusive, admit that nothing that was merely excited, emotional, or hysterical could be so touching. And this quality of tenderness is perceptible and quick in all she has written about children, happy and unhappy, living and dead.

If the knight and the lady had fresh and spiritual meaning for her, and were not made vulgar for her zeal and her heart, the over-written subject of little children and the sentimentalised subject of their early death were to her perpetual and unmarred, fresh as nature and inviolate. So is it with the "conventional" landscape, which we may think bad pictures of mountains, waterfalls, and pines had spoilt for our unducky and belated eyes, but which, in fact and in nature, when we do face them, when we surprise them aloof in their reality, are as far apart from minor art as though man had never opened any exhibitions—as solitary, as ancient, and as original. The grave of a child, or of a poet, it is, or as Mrs. Browning contemplated it, is restored to poetry

and to tears, or rather was never lost to them.

"Her glories shall never fade." This was a poet's conviction of the fresh immortality of the poet he married. Robert Brownian who made this one emphatic prophecy, did not much dabble in written

criticism. Perhaps there is no famous writer who has written less about writing—so far as the public knows. His own poetry would hardly permit explanations, would gain no security by defence, and indeed seems to lose something of its strength of movement when it is divided and dispersed into little rills and streamlets by the care of commentators, and spread out thinly for examination. Browning does not give us the prose of other men's poetry, and he left to Societies the care of giving us the prose of his own. A word of his about poetry is rare and valuable; and it is appropriate to find it, not in prose of his, but in verse. It is appropriate also that he does not pause to give measons, but uses that simple form of prophecy which is taken into the speech of all great men in their securest moments, as it is also used by the world with very various sound. Poets have the right to be prophets; for if prophecy is cheap when it is done with ease, it costs a prophet's whole authority when it is done with honour.

"Her glories shall never fade," even when that in her poetry shall fade which had more semblance of life than force of life the faults that came of a too conscious and too emphatic revolt against her time, a too resolute originality. In another age Elizabeth Barrett Browning would not have needed, or have thought she needed, to spend her strength upon a strained attitude. That attitude is so tense at times as to become defiant. The blank verse of "Aurora Leigh" is defiant almost throughout, and the phrase has a turn of assertion and of menace. It needs that the reader should keep his own composure in order to feel the value, the recollection and deliberation. of the principles of life and art that she served. In her politics she was too rash, indeed, but not in her steadfast eagerness for righteousness and in the continuous impulsiveness of her passion for truth. Such impulses are those of perpetual motion; they are flights like the flight of planets. Here is no flagging and no fall; and the leap of the spirit is not rash enough. None the less are those moments welcome when the author of "Lady Geraldine's Courtship" relaxes the rush of her manner and gathers herself into a shape of gravity and ease better befitting the dignity of her feeling. For example, the "Sea-Mew" has such a pause of style, and so have some of the "Sonnets from the Portuguese," in which is audible the sweetest and much the slowest of ther whispers. The sense of hurry, otherwise, is felt somewhat as a waste of the reader's will, if not of hers. It was no waste of her will iff only the rush of the style—I had almost said the dash, but no such vulgar suggestion would be just—was natural to her, was really her mood, or her most frequent mood, and not—as already suggested—a thing assumed because the times were dull and the literary manners of the day demure.

It is difficult not to attribute something of this resolute style to the seclusion of the years in the course of which Mrs. Browning's literary habits were formed. Nothing but the secrecy of a dark sick-room and a sofa could give a sensitive woman the strange courage of Elizabeth Barrett's poems. Out of sight she had no fear of the vociferous

^{1 &}quot; Balaustion's Adventure."

though sweet part she took in the world. She was bold in her hidingplace—very bold, for example, as a letter-writer. Some of her correspondents had never seen her face; she smote them with words of emphatic play, rallied them, challenged them, faced them in twenty encounters. There is a certain tone of letter-writing-confident, with emphatically-finished sentences, and a sense of effect, without much cost of wit. Byron seems to have invented it, chiefly for the sake of its results upon the mind of an admiring, respectfully deprecating Tom Moore. With Byron it was a style of bounce. It was never masculine enough to be called swashing, even by Rosalind, and exceedingly gentle women caught the way of it. See, for instance, how Charlotte Brontë wrote to correspondents who did not know her; to those who did, her tone was more wavering, more reluctant, and more natural. That Byron tone then, is the one, much refined, and joined to intellectual matter, which Elizabeth Barrett's letters sound at times. It would be grotesque to liken her to Byron—the most sincere soul to the paltry soul, incapable of valuable sincerity—and there is no possible kinship of spirit. It is a mere manner, common in its day to the mildest spirits, conscious of themselves. It disappeared from Mrs. Browning's letters precisely when she appeared—when she rose from her sofa, stood at a husband's side, received his friends, faced the fact of her fame with her own delicate physique, no longer lurking in that delusive bower which secluded writers—those who are women are apt to build for themselves out of their fancies as to what they probably seem to be in the mind and thought of the world of their readers. Of all the bowers of women this is the least worthy, the least sweet, the least stable, and the least profitable. It is curious to watch Charlotte Brontë-shy when she was modestly visible-march martially into that sham hiding-place and strut within. A sham hiding-place, because the woman, despite her reason and her selfknowledge, can hardly resist the tempting peril of thinking of herself not as she is but as she thinks she may be conjectured to be by those who perceive her, or guess at her, from what she writes. It is an intricacy of guesses. And she, seeing a strange figure wearing her name and author of her words, feels a change enormously refreshing and relieving. She has known herself all too well for a certain number of years, and here is a new self, and generally a flattered self, almost to believe in. Elizabeth Barrett was evidently too experienced a soul really to let her own simplicity so slip aside, but her letters are not to be read without the perception of an illusion, an illusive Elizabeth, fugitive indeed, but detained by her own hand for a little time within her literary bower.

Throughout the political poems, but most of all in "Casa Guidi Windows," the poet is a little wrought upon by the stimulating consciousness that contemporary political history is not very often an inspiration of a woman's song. She is not calm. The care of public affairs takes, in her verse, a teaching, announcing, denouncing, judicially excited tone, whereas the questions so whirled to an eloquent conclusion are amongst the most difficult of the century, and matter for a deliberate thought more fitly uttered in a dry, daily, hesitating

voice than in rhyme and rhetoric. Mrs. Browning disposes, for example, of the small states in favour of Italian unity; but what would her heart have felt had it indeed been prophetic - had it possessed that sight of the future which it assumed as a very condition of rhetorical verse—and had it perceived the Italy of fifty years ahead, a deciduous nation thronging abroad, over seas, and into modernised towns, defeated, like a helpless rout of autumn leaves hurried by the winds of a national adversity. These people were once —when she inordinately pitied them—the most industrious of European people, agricultural in work and heart, enduring privations that were not bitter, not squalid, and not stunting to mind or muscle. They had their faults, but the prevalent system of land-tenure interwove their interests with the landlord's, so that the egoism of poverty was, as it were, unclosed, unloosed, partaken, and made human; and the tendency to tyrannous overwork was checked by the gay rebukes of Church holidays and the climate. Where peasant-proprietorship existed, a soil that can give ten hay-harvests in a year secured food to all the frugal. But before the Triple Alliance was even a project, the agriculture of Italy was taxed almost to confiscation, in honour of the new "European Power," and since then the limit has been overpassed in honour of the "European Power of the first class." The destruction of the farmers and peasants of Italy is not an act of yesterday. It dates from the events that Mrs. Browning sang in "Casa Guidi Windows." There are now, too, certain phases of life in the Sicilian mines that she did not foretell when she uttered "The Cry of the Children" in England. The mournful sequel to "Casa Guidi Windows" has been acted, not written. The disaster of the corruption of Italy would not be "accepted of song," and no singer will make hymns to it. In the fervour of national movement, sentimental war, grievance, patriotism, indignation, and idea, the Englishwoman who wrote that poem even condescended, in the cause of Italian unity, to introduce into her verse the name of "Pope Joan"—either seriously, and as though the name and personage were historical, and had never been disproved, or else cynically, as though, in the cause of Italian unity, a vulgar myth or two could piously be paltered with. If a lofty allusion to that long-rebuked myth, "Pope Joan," accompanied by indignation—that must, alas! have been either simulated or ignorant—was laxly forgiven to an authoress overexcited by foreign politics, how does it look now that the foreign politics have ended in so much sorry prose, now that the grievance is more than redressed, and the fires are out? It is just worth noting that the good Englishwoman has an impetuous line upon the heroism of "Garibaldi's wife," whereas the wife in question was a wife, but not his. "Casa Guidi Windows" is not only an irresponsible piece of contemporary history, it is also a falsetto outcry, and a stiff and heavy-footed work in versification. Terza rima it is not, though at starting you get an impression that it ought to be. It is but an arrangement of stanzas, whereas the linked and continuous terza rima, obviously, is designed to make the stanza impossible. Although the terza rima flies low and not swiftly, it never alights, until the innovation of a couplet closes two final wings.

In her lovely "Sonnets from the Portuguese," Mrs. Browning is strictly Petrarchan in rhymes though not in pauses—nor, therefore, in construction. And through this narrow pass of difficulty for English language the noble impulse of her thought takes her sweetly, swiftly, and in poetic grace of action. With the higher workmanship goes closer thinking. Every sonnet of the series has a subject fit for it, a thought with a close. As you come to the last line, and the heart of the poem, that has throbbed strongly, subsides, you acquiesce in the last word. It is the last word, for the time. "Her glories shall never fade," and they shall flourish chiefly in these poems, full of pure heart and of intelligence. It does not need to make a very large collection of best sonnets in the language in order to enclose these. None but the smallest would exclude them. Here is no question of preferences in style and manner. In the sonnets the meaning is in full and calm possession, and manner marches under that steady leadership.

Mrs. Browning was one of the few women poets who have done more than pass over the surface of the classics. She was not only well read, but passionately well read, in Greek literature while she was still young; and not only in the poets, dramatists and philosophers of the antique times properly so called, but in the Greek Christian writers— Fathers and Apologists—through whose work she made for herself a peculiar path of study. But the purest and severest examples of the great ages left her unaffected except by admiration. Neither the Greek measure nor the Roman limit put any detaining or moderating touch upon her enterprising mind. To the spur, to the loosened rein, to the lash, to the chirrup, that Pegasus of hers was ready to answer with a bound, but not to the curb. There is no general conclusion to be drawn from this fact of her poetic history; nor need we make more than is reasonable of the ignorance of Keats or the scholarship of Tennyson, in the controversy as to Greek. One thing only is too sure and too obvious to need proof—that in one literature a writer of English poetry or prose must be well and deeply read, and that is English literature. Whatever he may gain, or not gain, from the fifth century before Christ in Greece, he cannot, without disabling loss to his own English, neglect the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries after Christ in England. It is not very evident that Mrs. Browning gave much studious attention to Jeremy Taylor or Hooker, to Campion or Vaughan. She is modern with the modernism of 1840 in romance, of 1860 in sentiment and ethics. It is not that she is always thus demonstrative and excitable; I have already named her quieter and less strained poetry with all admiration; but we cannot read without a conviction that she found her own keenest satisfaction in the other mood, and held as her successes the poems that she seemed to sign with a flourish. And this I am paradoxically constrained to say of a poet distinctively intellectual, for this she is. She does not write without a thought worthy the name. Emotion is always there, but emotion vibrating from the intellect. Not a love-lyric of hers, not a song of romance, not a religious meditation, but is not only governed, but formed, by a thought. This warmest, most cordial, most touched and touching, most moved and moving, of writers-this woman

eminently a woman of feeling—has her place amongst the intellectual poets of our great literature. And even those who most delight in the nothingness of the immortal little sing-songs of Burns and Byron will doubtless confess that the verse of rational man or woman is in a

worthier world of poetry.

Mrs. Browning's best art was also her most natural feeling, her most natural thought; and her least conscious diction her most expressive. She needed some more responsible enthusiasm than that which she cherished for the expulsion of the Austrian in order to do her best—such a passion as the Love in the sonnets, and the Devotion in "Cowper's Grave."

ALICE MEYNELL.

A CHRONOLOGY OF MRS. BROWNING

Born at Burn Hall, Durham		•	•			March	6th,	1806
"The Battle of Marathon"	•	٠	•	•				1820
"An Essay on Mind".	•			•				1826
" Prometheus Bound " .		•		•	٠		•	1833
"The Seraphim".	•		4,	•	•	•	•	1838
" Poems"					•		•	1844
Married Robert Browning	•					o	•	1846
"Sonnets [from the Portugue	ese]"	•	•		•		•	1847
Birth of her son		•	•		٠			18 49
"The Runaway Slave at Pilg	grim's	Point	,,	۰	٠	ø	•	1849
"Casa Guidi Windows".			•	•	ů	•	•	1851
"Two Poems by E. B. and I	R. Br	ownin	g "	•	•	•	•	1854
"Aurora Leigh"						•	•	1857
" Poems before Congress"			•		•	•	•	1860
Died at Florence		•	٠		٠	June	30th,	1861
Last Poems	•	•	•	٠			•	1862
"The Greek Christian Poems	3 "	•	•	٠	0	u	•	1863
"Letters of E. B. Browning.	" T1	vo vol	S.,	٠	g.	0	o	1877

CONTENTS.

INTRODUCTION—						PA	GE
[시설시] 경기 : [시설경 [] [기시생기 하일 중에 영화 기사성							v
AN ESSAY ON MIND, WITH OTH	ER P	OEMS	(182	6)—			
An Essay on Mind						•	I
Preface		•					I
. Analysis of the First Book			•	. 9 .			3
Book I							4
Analysis of the Second Book			•	•			14
Book II	•		•			•	15
Notes to Book I					•		27
Notes to Book II						•	29
Miscellaneous Poems—							
To my Father on his Birthday			la fi	•	\$1.00X		31
Spenserian Stanzas	•			•		•	31
Verses to my Brother .	•		•	* 19 19 1		•	32
Stanzas on the Death of Lord 1	Byron		•				32
Memory		•	•			•	33
To	•	•		400		•	33
Stanzas	•	•	•		•		34
The Past		•	•				34
The Prayer	•	•144	erterdi. •i., gave				35
On a Picture of Riego's Widow	•		•				35
Song			•				36
The Dream			•			•	39
Riga's Last Song		•	•				37
The Vision of Fame				•			38
PROMETHEUS BOUND (1833).		•	•		•	•	39
MISCELLANEOUS POEMS (1833)—							
The Tempest							59
A Sea-side Meditation .							63
A Vision of Life and Death							65
Earth				•			67
The Picture Gallery at Penshu	rst		•				68
To a Poet's Child							69
Minstrelsy				•			70
To the Memory of Sir Uvedale	Price,	Bart.	igina da				70
The Autumn							72
보내다 되다 좀 많은 눈물이를 보다라면 보고 생물이 되었다.	viii						

								F	AGE
The Death-bed of Te	resa	del R	iego						72
To Victoire, on Her	Marri	age						•	73
	111411			y			•	•	73
To a Boy. Remonstrance and I	enlv								74
	cepry								74
An Epitaph .									75
The Image of God									75
The Appeal .	•								76
Idols • •									77
Hymn									٠ 77
Weariness .									
THE SERAPHIM (1838)-	-								
The Seraphim .	•				•	•			77
Part the First.									77
Part the Second				•			•		82
Epilogue		•		• 4		•			92
OTHER POEMS (1838)—									
The Poet's Vow.									93
Part the First								•	93
Part the Second								•	94
Part the Third								100	96
Part the Fourth									96
Part the Fifth									98
The Romaunt of Mar	gret								99
Isobel's Child	•								102
A Romance of the G	anges								108
An Island . •									TIT
The Deserted Garden									113
The Soul's Travelling		불만한							114
Sounds									117
Night and the Merry	Man								119
Earth and Her Prais									120
The Virgin Mary to		bild '	Tesus						123
To Bettine .	une e		,						125
Man and Nature									126
A Sea-side Walk									127
The Sea-mew .									127
Felicia Hemans .									128
Memory and Hope									129
그리 아니네 하루 부래를 하고 그렇게 하고 있는 그렇게 되었다.									130
My Doves									130
The Little Friend									131
The Student .									
				(7-4).					132
The Exile's Return				•					133
A Song against Sing	mg							•	134
Stanzas									134
Victoria's Tears .								44.	135 135
WILDLIES LEGIS	State of the state of	10 SALES SEE	THE RESERVE OF	and the second	(2) 化燃烧等度	and the second	1.71 (1.12)	100	

								3	PAGE
Vanities		•							136
Bereavement .	4.						•		136
Consolation .			•						137
To Mary Russell Mitfe	ord						•		137
A Supplication for Lo									137
The Mediator .			•						138
The Weeping Saviour									138
The Measure .									138
Cowper's Grave .							1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1		139
The Weakest Thing					40.46				140
The Pet-name .									140
CHAUCER MODERNISE	:D (1	841)							
아이들이 그렇지 않는 그 없이 하다를 때가요?									
Queen Annelida and					•	•		•	141
The Complaint of Ann		to Fa	use	Arcite	•	•	•		145
POEMS (1844, 1850, 185)	3)—								
A Drama of Exile									148
The Soul's Expression	1	100							182
The Seraph and Poet									183
On a Portrait of Wor	dswo	rth by	B.	R. Hav	don				183
Past and Future .			Ţ.						183
Irreparableness .			-21.						183
Tears									184
Grief				-					184
Substitution .			. Ē.,						184
Comfort									184
Perplexed Music .									185
Work								. 7.	
Futurity									185
The Two Sayings									185
The Look									0.0
The Meaning of the l	ook					4.74			~~
A Thought for a Lon	elv T	eath-t	ed.						186
Work and Contemple		, catil	,						186
Pain in Pleasure.	LLOII								187
An Apprehension									187
Discontent									187
Patience Taught by	Vo tara								187
Cheerfulness Taught									188
		cason				100			188
	•								188
Adequacy	· Dani-								188
To George Sand, a					•				-0-
To George Sand, a								•	189
The Prisoner .									-0-
Insufficiency .		•					•		189
The Romaunt of the					, Q		u		194
The Lay of the Bro	wn F	cosary							194

								PAGE
The Lay of the Brown Ro	sary	(conti	nued).					
Second Part	100	•	•	•		•		195
Third Part			•	•	•			198
Fourth Part			•	•	•	•		200
The Mourning Mother				•	•			201
A Valediction	•							202
Lady Geraldine's Courtshi	p.		•		•			203
Conclusion								210
A Lament for Adonis .	e Soes • Joseph	Ya u • i i						211
A Vision of Poets .								213
Conclusion								223
Rhyme of the Duchess-Ma	av .							226
The Rhyme								226
The Lady's Yes	1 1							234
The Poet and the Bird								234
The Lost Bower			1,30,150					234
A Child Asleep	•							
Crowned and Wedded.								240
Crowned and Buried .		•		•				241
To Flush, my Dog .								242
The Fourfold Aspect .						t Ast	•	245
A Flower in a Letter .		•						247
The Mask		•			•			249
	•		•	•	•	•		250
Calls on the Heart .				•	•		•	251
Wisdom Unapplied .	•			•	•		•	252
The Cry of the Human	•	•			•	•	•	253
A Lay of the Early Rose	•	•	•	•	•	•		254
Bertha in the Lane .	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	256
Loved Once				100	• .			259
A Rhapsody of Life's Pro-	gress	•			•		•	260
L. E. L.'s Last Question	1.04	•					•	263
The House of Clouds .	•		•		•		•	264
Catarina to Camoens .			•					265
A Portrait		•					•	267
Sleeping and Watching				(1) jî :				268
Wine of Cyprus				•				268
The Romance of the Swar	i's Ne	st.						270
Lessons from the Gorse								272
The Dead Pan								272
Hector in the Garden .								275
Flush or Faunus								276
Finite and Infinite .								277
The Runaway Slave at Pi	lgrim'	s Poi	nt					277
The Cry of the Children								281
Two Sketches-								201
Н. В								28-
А. В. ,								283
Mountaineer and Poet								283
The Poet								284

CONTENTS

								P	AGE
Hiram Powers' Gre	ek Slave	3		•	•	•	•	•	284
Life				•		•	•	•	284
Love					•	•	•		285
Heaven and Earth						•		•	285
The Prospect .							•		285
The Prospect . Hugh Stuart Boyd	His Bl	indn	ess					•	286
Hugh Stuart Boyd	, His D	eath,	1848						286
Hugh Stuart Boyd							•		286
Future and Past.									286
• Confessions						4.46			287
A Sabbath Morning	g at Sea								288
Human Life's Mys	terv							•	289
A Child's Thought									290
The Claim									2 90
Life and Love .					•				291
Inclusions									291
Insufficiency .									291
Song of the Rose				. 244					291
A Dead Rose .									292
A Woman's Shorte									77.
A Man's Requirem									293
A Year's Spinning								4.17	293
Change upon Chan		•					•		300
That Day	gc ·		•						
That Day A Reed					•	•	•	•	295
A Child's Grave at	Elonon	•	•					•	
									295
SONNETS FROM TH	E POR	TUG	UESE	(182	17-18	50)	•	٠	297
CASA GUIDI WINDO)WS (18	351)-	-						
Advertisement to	the Firs	t Ed	ition						307
Part I									
Part II									328
AURORA LEIGH (18	57)—								
First Book						•	٠		342
Second Book .									361
Third Book, .									14 (17)
Fourth Book .									403
Fifth Book						•			423
Sixth Book .		925					•		445
Seventh Book .						•			
Eighth Book .									
Ninth Book .									510
			00.						, _ `
POEMS BEFORE CO	NGRES	S (1	.860) 						
Preface			•					•	526
Napoleon III in I			•			•	•	•	527
The Dance.	•	۰					•		532

								475	PAGE
A Tale of Villafranca									533
A Court Lady .									534
어마님들이 어느 생기가 들어 없다면 하는 것이 되고 그 프로그램이다. 그 수 없는 사람			30.3				Carlot A		536
Christmas Gifts .									537
Italy and the World					4443			48 (C) 18 (18)	538
									549
A Curse for a Nation	•								31
LAST POEMS (1862)—									
Advertisement .	•	•		•					542
Little Mattie .			•	•	•		•		•542
A False Step .	•	•	•				•	Y .	543
Void in Law	•			•		•			543
Lord Walter's Wife				•		•			544
Bianca among the Nig	hting	gales				•			546
My Kate								•	548
A Song for the Ragge	d Scl	nools o	of Lo	ndon		•			548
May's Love									550
Amy's Cruelty .					2.5	14.4			550
My Heart and I .							•		551
The Best Thing in the	. Wo	rlü							552
Where's Agnes?									552
Where's Agnes?. De Profundis .									553
A Musical Instrument									
First News from Villa		а.							
King Victor Emanuel	enter	ing F	loren	се Ат	ril 18	60			
The Sword of Castruc	cio C	astrac	ani	, _P					557
Summing up in Italy		ao a ao	W111						558
"Died "									17.00
The Forced Recruit				100		46.			560
									561
생기도 보는 경우하는 하면 내가 있어서 하는 사람들은 사람들이 가는 사람들이 살으면 다	•								
Only a Curl A View across the Ro		Comp					•		
A view across the Ro	man	Camp	agua				•		562
The King's Gift .									563
Parting Lovers .	•				•		关系的		563
Mother and Poet.	•	•			•				565
Marine 2 Tremorses			•						567
The North and the Sc	outh							•	568
TRANSLATIONS-									
Paraphrase on The	OCRIT	us-							
The Cyclops .			•				100		568
PARAPHRASES ON API									Joo
Psyche gazing on C									570
Psyche wafted by 2								4974	W. D. 11 14
Psyche and Pan	76 5 7754 4447786							•	571
Psyche propitiating	Cere	s .				1 123		•	
Psyche and the Eas			- 14	•					572
Psyche and Cerberu									573
Psyche and Proserp				•				*	573
			* * 1	•	•	•		۰	574

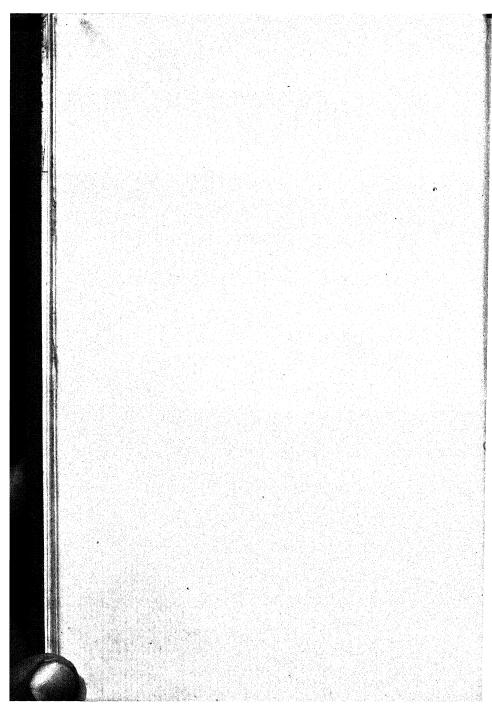
CONTENTS

xix

612

PAGE PARAPHRASES ON APULEIUS (continued). Psyche and Venus 574 Mercury carries Psyche to Olympus . 574 Marriage of Psyche and Cupid . . . 574 PARAPHRASES ON NONNUS-How Bacchus finds Ariadne Sleeping . 575 How Bacchus comforts Ariadne 576 PARAPHRASES ON HESIOD-· Bacchus and Ariadne. 577 FROM EURIPIDES-Antistrophe . . 577 PARAPHRASES ON HOMER— Hector and Andromache . . . 577 The Daughters of Pandarus . . . 579 Another Version . . . 580 PARAPHRASE ON ANACREON-Ode to the Swallow . 580 PARAPHRASE ON HEINE-The Last Translation 580 THE GREEK CHRISTIAN POETS (1863) 582

THE BOOK OF THE POETS (1863)



MRS. BROWNING'S POEMS

AN ESSAY ON MIND

WITH OTHER POEMS

1826.

"Brama assai, poco spera, e nulla chiede."

PREFACE

In offering this little Volume to the world, it is not my intention to trespass long on its indulgence, "with prefaces, and passages, and excusations." As, however, preface-writing strangely reminds one of Bottom's prologuizing device, which so ingeniously sheweth the "disfiguration of moonshine," and how lion was no lion after all, but plain "Snug the joiner," I will treat the subject according to my great prototype; declaring to those readers who "cannot abide lions," that their "parlous fear " is here unnecessary, and assuring the public that "moonshine" shall be introduced as seldom as is consistent with modern composition.

But something more is necessary; and since writers commonly make use of their prefaces as opportunities for auricular confession to the absolving reader, I am prepared to acknowledge, with unfeigned humility, that the imputation of presumption is likely to be attached to me, on account of the form and title of this production. And yet, to imagine that a confidence in our powers is undeviatingly shewn by our selection of an extensive field for their exertion, is an error; for the subject supports the writer, as much as it is supported by him. It is not difficult to draw a succession of affecting images from objects intrinsically affecting; and ideas

grossness; unless indeed, like Thales. she fall into the water while looking at the stars.

'Ethical poetry," says that immortal writer we have lost, "is the highest of all poetry, as the highest of all earthly objects must be moral truth." I am nevertheless aware how often it has been asserted that poetry is not a proper vehicle for abstract ideas-how far the assertion may be correct, is with me a matter of doubt. We do not deem the imaginative incompatible with the philosophic, for the name of Bacon is on our lips; then why should we expel the argumentative from the limits of the poetic? If indeed we consider Poetry as Plato considered her, when he banished her from his republic; or as Newton, when he termed her "a kind of ingenious nonsense;" or as Locke, when he pronounced that "gaming and poetry went usually together;" or as Boileau, when he boasted of being acquainted with two arts equally useful to mankind—" writing verses. and playing at skittles,"-we shall find no difficulty in assenting to this opinion. But while we behold in poetry, the inspiritings to political feeling, the "monumentum aere perennius" of buried nations, we are loth to believe her unequal to the higher walks of intellect: when we behold the works of the great though erring Lucretius, the sublime Dante, the reasoning Popewhen we hear Quintilian acknowarising from an elevated subject are ledge the submission due from Philonaturally elevated. As, Tacitus hath sophers to Poets, and Gibbon declare "materia aluntur." Thought Homer to be "the lawgiver, the catches the light reflected from the theologian, the historian, and the object of her contemplation, and, philosopher of the ancients," we are "expanded by the genius of the unable to believe it. Poetry is the spot," loses much of her material enthusiasm of the understanding:

and, as Milton finely expresses it, there is "a high reason in her fancies."

As, according to the plan of my work, I have dwelt less on the operations of the mind than on their effects, so I have not touched on that point difficult to argue, and impossible to determine-the nature of her substance. The investigation is curious, and the subject a glorious one; but, after all, our closest reasonings thereupon are acquired from analogy, and our most extensive views must be content to take their places among other ingenious speculations. columns of Hercules are yet unpassed. Metaphysicians have cavilled and confuted; but they have failed in their endeavour to establish any permanent theoretical edifice on that windy site. The effort was vainly made even by our enlightened Locke; and, as in the days of Socratic disputation, it is still given to the learned to ask, though not to answer, 'τί δὲ ἡ ψυχὴ.' Perhaps. however, the following sensible acknowledgment would better become their human lips, than the most artfully constructed hypothesis-The things we understand are so excellent. that we believe what we do not understand to be likewise excellent.1

The effects of mental operation, or productions of the mind, I have divided into two classes—the philosophical, and the poetical; the former of which I have subdivided into three divisions - History, Physics, and Metaphysics: History, or the doctrine of man, as an active and social being; Physics, or the doctrine of efficient causes; Metaphysics, or the doctrine of abstractions, and final causes. Lord Bacon's comprehensive discernment of the whole, and Locke's acute penetration into parts, have assisted me in my trembling endeavour to trace the outline of these branches of knowledge. have considered them methodically

and in detail, would have greatly exceeded both the limits of my volume, and, what is more material, the extent of my information: but if I may be allowed to hope that

"The lines, though touch'd thus faintly, are drawn right,"

I shall have nothing left to wish.

Poetry is treated in as cursory a manner as Philosophy, though not precisely for the same reasons. have been deterred from a further development of her nature and principles, by observing that no single subject has employed the didactic pen with such frequent success, and by a consequent unwillingness to incur a charge of tediousness, when repeating what is well known, or one of presumption, when intruding newfangled maxims in the place of those deservedly established. The act of white-washing an ancient Gothic edifice would be less indicative of bad taste than the latter attempt. Since the time of Horace, many excellent didactic writers have formed poetic systems from detached passages of that unsystematic work, his "Ars Poetica." Pope, and Boileau. in their Essays on Poetry and Criticism have with superior method traced his footsteps. And yet, "haud passibus aequis"—it is only justice to observe, that though the poem has been excelled, the Poet remains unequalled. For the merits of his imitators are, except in arrangement, Horace's merits, while the merits of Horace are his own.2

I wish that the sublime circuit of intellect, embraced by the plan of my Poem, had fallen to the lot of a spirit more powerful than mine. I wish it had fallen to the lot of one familiar with the dwelling-place of Mind, who could search her secret chambers, and call forth those that sleep; or of one who could enter into her temples, and cast out the iniquitous who buy and sell, profaning the sanctuary of God; or of one who could try the

² He is indebted to Aristotle, which however cannot be said to affect his poetical originality.

I I here adopt, with some little variation, an expression which fell from Socrates, on the subject of a work by Heraclitus the obscure,

golden links of that chain which hangs from Heaven to earth, and shew that it is not placed there for man to covet for lucre's sake, or for him to weigh his puny strength at one end against Omnipotence at the other; but that it is placed there to join, in mysterious union, the natural and the spiritual, the mortal and the eternal, the creature and the Creator. I wish the subject of my Poem had fallen into such hands, that the powers of the execution might have equalled the vastness of the design-and the Public will wish so too. But as it is -though I desire this field to be more meritoriously occupied by others-I would mitigate the voice of censure for myself. I would endeavour to shew, that while I may have often erred, I have not clung willingly to error; and that while I may have failed in representing, I have never ceased to love Truth. If there be much to condemn in the following pages, let my narrow capacity, as opposed to the infinite object it would embrace, be generously considered; if there be any thing to approve, I am ready to acknowledge the assistance which my illustrations have received from the exalting nature of their subject—as the waters of Halvs acquire a peculiar taste from the soil over which they flow.

AN ESSAY ON MIND.

"My narrow leaves cannot in them contayne The large discourse."-Spenser.

ANALYSIS OF THE FIRST BOOK.

THE poem commences by remarking the desire, natural to the mind, of investigating its own qualities—qualities the more exalted, as their development has seldom been impeded by external circumstances—The various dispositions of different minds are next considered, and are compared to the varieties of scenic nature; inequalities in the spiritual not being more wonderful than inequalities in the natural—Byron and Campbell contrasted—The varieties of genius

criticism is briefly alluded to, as generally independent of genius, but always useful to its productions-Jeffrey-The various stages of life in which genius appears, and the different causes by which its influence is discovered—Cowley, Alfieri—Allusion to the story of the emotion of Thucydides on hearing Herodotus recite his History at the Olympic Games-The elements of Mind are thus arranged, Invention, Judgment, Memory, and Association—The creations of mind are next noticed, among which we first behold Philosophy— History, Science, and Metaphysics are included in the studies of Philo-

sophy.

Of History, it is observed, that though on a cursory view her task of recalling the past may appear of little avail, it is in reality one of the highest importance—The living are sent for a lesson to the grave—The present state of Rome alluded to: and the future state of England anticipated—Condemnation of those who deprive historical facts of their moral inference, and only make use of their basis to render falsehood more secure -Gibbon-Condemnation of those who would colour the political conduct of past ages with their own political feelings-Hume, Mitford-From the writers, we turn to the readers of history-Their extreme scepticism, or credulity-They are recommended to be guided by no faction; but to measure facts by their consistency with reason-to study the personal character and circumstances of an historian, before they give entire credit to his representations—The influence of private feeling and prejudice-Miller-Science is introduced—Apostrophe to man— Episode of Archimedes—Parallel between history and science—The pride of the latter considered most excessive—The risk attending knowledge -Buffon, Leibnitz-The advantageous experience to be derived from the errors of others, illustrated by an allusion to Southey's Hexameters -Utility the object of science-An having been thus treated, the art of exclusive attention to parts deprecated, since it is impossible even to have a just idea of PARTS, without acquiring a knowledge of their relative situation in the whole-The extreme difficulty of enlarging the contemplations of a mind long accustomed to contracted views-The scale of knowledge-every science being linked with the one preceding and succeeding-giving and receiving reciprocal support—Why this system is not calculated, as might be conjectured, either to render scientific men superficial, or to intrude on the genius-That the operations of danger of knowledge originates in PARTIAL knowledge-Apostrophe to Newton.

BOOK I.

SINCE Spirit first inspir'd, pervaded all.

And Mind met Matter, at th' Eternal call-

Since dust weigh'd Genius down, or Genius gave

Th' immortal halo to the mortal's grave :

Th' ambitious soul her essence hath defin'd.

And Mind hath eulogiz'd the pow'rs of

Ere Revelation's holy light began To strengthen Nature, and illumine Man-

When Genius, on Icarian pinions. flew.

And Nature's pencil, Nature's portrait, drew;

When Reason shudder'd at her own wan beam,

And Hope turn'd pale beneath the sickly gleam-

Ev'n then hath Mind's triumphant influence spoke. Dust own'd the spell, and Plato's

spirit woke-Spread her eternal wings, and rose sublime

Beyond th' expanse of circumstance and time:

Blinded, but free, with faith instinctive, soar'd,

saints ador'd!

Thou thing of light! that warm'st the breasts of men,

Breath'st from the lips, and tremblest from the pen!

Thou, form'd at once t' astonish, fire, beguile.

With Bacon reason, and with Shakespeare smile!

The subtle cause, ethereal essence! say,

Why dust rules dust, and clay surpasses clay;

Why a like mass of atoms should combine

To form a Tully, and a Catiline? Or why, with flesh perchance of equal

weight, One cheers a prize-fight, and one

frees a state? Why do not I the muse of Homer call,

Or why, indeed, did Homer sing at all?

Why wrote not Blackstone upon love's delusion,

Or Moore, a libel on the Constitution?

Why must the faithful page refuse to tell That Dante, Laura sang, and Pet-

rarch, Hell-That Tom Paine argued in the

throne's defence-That Byron nonsense wrote, and

Thurlow sense— That Southey sigh'd with all a patriot's cares,

While Locke gave utterance to Hexameters? Thou thing of light! instruct my pen

to find Th' unequal pow'rs, the various forms

of Mind!

O'er Nature's changeful face direct your sight:

View light meet shade, and shade dissolve in light!

Mark, from the plain, the cloudcapp'd mountain soar:

The sullen ocean spurn the desert shore!

Behold, afar, the playmate of the storm.

Wild Niagara lifts his awful form-And found her home, where prostrate | Spits his black foam above the madd'ning floods,

Himself the savage of his native Above, the Avalanche's thunder woods-

See him, in air, his smoking torrents wheel.

While the rocks totter, and the forests

Then, giddy, turn ! lo ! Shakespeare's Avon flows,

Charm'd, by the green-sward's kiss, to soft repose;

With tranquil brow reflects the smile of fame,

And, 'midst her sedges, sighs her Poet's name.

Thus, in bright sunshine, and alternate storms,

Is various mind express'd in various forms.

In equal men, why burns not equal fire?

Why are not valleys hills, -or mountains higher?

Her destin'd way, hath destin'd Nature trod;

While Matter, Spirit rules, and Spirit, God.

Let outward scenes, for inward sense design'd,

Call back our wand'rings to the world of Mind!

Where Reason, o'er her vasty realms, may stand,

Convene proud thoughts, and stretch her scepter'd hand.

Here, classic recollections breathe around;

Here, living Glory consecrates the ground ;

And here, Mortality's deep waters

The shores of Genius, and the paths of Man!

O'er this imagin'd land, your soul direct-

Mark Byron, the Mont Blanc of intellect.

'Twixt earth and heav'n exalt his brow sublime.

O'erlook the nations, and shake hands with Time!

Stretch'd at his feet do Nature's beauties throng

The flow'rs of love, the gentleness of song;

speaks.

While Terror's spirit walks abroad. and shricks!

To some Utopian strand, some fairy shore,

Shall soft-eved Fancy waft her Campbell o'er!

Wont, o'er the lyre of Hope, his hand to fling,

And never waken a discordant string; Who ne'er grows awkward by affecting grace,

Or "Common sense confounds with commonplace:"

To bright conception, adds expression chaste.

And human feeling joins to classic taste.

For still, with magic art, he knows. and knew.

To touch the heart, and win the judgment too!

Thus, in uncertain radiance, Genius glows,

And fitful gleams on various mind bestows:

While Mind, exulting in th' admitted

On various themes, reflects its kindling ray.

Unequal forms receive an equal light:

And Klopstock wrote what Kepler could not write.

Yet Fame hath welcom'd a less noble few,

And Glory hail'd whom Genius never knew ;

Art labour'd, Nature's birthright, to secure,

And forg'd, with cunning hand, her signature.

The scale of life is link'd by close degrees;

Motes float in sunbeams, mites exist in cheese ;

Critics seize half the fame which bards receive.-

And Shakespeare suffers that his friends may live;

While Bentley leaves, on stilts, the beaten track,

And peeps at glory from some ancient's back. (a)

But, though to hold a lantern to the sun

Be not too wise, and were as well undone—

Though, e'en in this inventive age, alas! A moral darkness can't be cur'd by

gas—

And, though we may not reasonably deem

How poets' craniums can be turn'd by steam—

Yet own we, in our juster reasonings, That lanterns, gas, and steam, are useful things—

And oft, this truth, Reflection ponders o'er—

Bards would write worse, if critics wrote no more.

Let Jeffrey's praise, our willing pen, engage,

The letter'd critic of a letter'd age! Who justly judges, rightfully dis-

cerns,
With wisdom teaches, and with
candour learns.

His name on Scotia's brightest tablet lives.

And proudly claims the laurel that it gives.

Eternal Genius! fashion'd like the sun,

To make all beautiful thou look'st upon!

Prometheus of our earth! whose kindling smile

May warm the things of clay a little while;

Till, by thy touch inspir'd, thine eyes survey'd,

Thou stoop'st to love the glory thou hast made;

And weepest, human-like, the mortal's fall,

When, by-and-bye, a breath disperses all.

Eternal Genius! mystic essence! say, How, on "the chosen breast," descends thy day!

Breaks it at once in Thought's celestial dream,

While Nature trembles at the sudden gleam?

Or steals it, gently, like the morning's light,

Shedding, unmark'd, an influence soft and bright,

Till all the landscape gather on the sight?

As different talents, different breasts, inspire,
So different causes wake the latent

fire.

The gentle Cowley of our native

clime, (b)
Lisp'd his first accents in Aönian

rhyme.
Alfieri's startling muse tun'd not her

strings, (c)
And dumbly look'd "unutterable things:"

Till, when six lustrums o'er his head had past.

Conception found expression's voice at last:

Broke the bright light, uprose the smother'd flame,—

And Mind and Nature own'd their poet's fame!

To some the waving woods, the harp of spring,

A gently-breathing inspiration bring! Some hear, from Nature's haunts, her whisper'd call;

And Mind hath triumph'd by an apple's fall.

Wave Fancy's picturing wand! recall the scene

Which Mind hath hallow'd—where her sons have been—

Where, 'midst Olympia's concourse, simply great,

Th' historic sage, the son of Lyxes, sate,

Grasping th' immortal scroll—he breath'd no sound,

But, calm in strength, an instant look'd around,
And rose—the tone of expectation

And rose—the tone of expectation rush'd
Through th' eager throng—he spake,

and Greece was hush'd! See, in that breathless crowd, Olorus

stand, (d)
While one fair boy hangs, list'ning, on

his hand—
The young Thucydides! with upward

brow
Of radiance, and dark eye, that beam-

ing now

Full on the speaker, drinks th' inspirëd air—

Gazing entranc'd, and turn'd to marble there!

Yet not to marble—for the wild emotion

Is kindling on his cheek like light on

Is kindling on his cheek, like light on ocean,

Coming to vanish; and his pulses throb

With transport, and the inarticulate sob
Swells to his lip—internal nature

leaps
To glorious life, and all th' historian

weeps!
The mighty master mark'd the favor'd child—

Did Genius linger there? She did, and smil'd!

Still, on itself, let Mind its eye direct, To view the elements of intellect— How wild Invention (daring artist!) plies

Her magic pencil, and creating dies; And Judgment, near the living canvas, stands,

To blend the colours for her airy hands;

While Memory waits, with twilight mists o'ercast,

To mete the length'ning shadows of the past:

And bold Association, not untaught, The links of fact, unites, with links of thought;

Forming th' electric chains, which, mystic, bind

Scholastic learning, and reflective mind.

Let reasoning Truth's unerring glance survey

The fair creations of the mental ray; Her holy lips, with just discernment, teach

The forms, the attributes, the modes of each;

And tell, in simple words, the narrow span

That circles intellect, and fetters man; Where darkling mists, o'er Time's last footstep, creep,

And Genius drops her languid wing—to weep.

See first Philosophy's mild spirit, nigh,

Raise the rapt brow, and lift the thoughtful eye;

Whether the glimmering lamp, that Hist'ry gave,

Light her enduring steps to some lone grave;

The while she dreams on him, asleep beneath,

And conjures mystic thoughts of life and death—

Whether, on Science' rushing wings, she sweep

From concave heav'n to earth—and search the deep;
Shewing the pensile globe attraction's

Shewing the pensile globe attraction's force,

The tides their mistress, and the stars their course:

Or whether (task with nobler object fraught)

She turn the pow'rs of thinking back on thought—

With mind, delineate mind; and dare define

The point, where human mingles with divine:

Majestic still, her solemn form shall stand, To shew the beacon on the distant

land—
Of thought, and nature, chronicler

sublime!
The world her lesson, and her teacher
Time!

And when, with half a smile, and half a sigh,

She lifts old History's faded tapestry, I'the dwelling of past years—she, aye, is seen

Point to the shades, where bright-'ning tints had been—

The shapeless forms outworn, and mildew'd o'er—

And bids us rev'rence what was lov'd before:

Gives the dank wreath and dusty urn to fame,

And lends its ashes—all she can—a name.

Think'st thou, in vain, while pale Time glides away,

She rakes cold graves, and chronicles their clay?

Think'st thou, in vain, she counts the bony things,

Once lov'd as patriots, or obev'd as kings?

Lifts she, in vain, the past's mysterious veil?

Seest thou no moral in her awful tale? Can man, the crumbling pile of nations, scan,-

And is their mystic language mute for man?

Go! let the tomb its silent lesson give, And let the dead instruct thee how to live!

If Tully's page hath bade thy spirit burn.

And lit the raptur'd cheek-behold his urn!

If Maro's strains, thy soaring fancy, guide.

That hail "th' eternal city" in their pride—(e)

Then turn to mark, in some reflective

The immortality of mortal pow'r! See the crush'd column, and the ruin'd dome-

'Tis all Eternity has left of Rome! While travell'd crowds, with curious gaze, repair,

To read the littleness of greatness there!

Alas! alas! so, Albion shall decay, And all my country's glory pass away!

So shall she perish, as the mighty

And be Italia's rival-in the dust: While her ennobled sons, her cities fair.

Be dimly thought of 'midst the things that were!

Alas! alas! her fields of pleasant green,

Her woods of beauty, and each wellknown scene!

Soon, o'er her plains, shall grisly Ruin haste. And the gay vale become the silent

waste! Ah! soon perchance, our native

tongue forgot-The land may hear strange words it knoweth not;

And the dear accents which our In vain for him was Truth's fair tablet bosoms move,

With sounds of friendship, or with tones of love,

May pass away; or, conn'd on mould'ring page,

Gleam 'neath the midnight lamp, for unborn sage;

To tell our dream-like tale to future years.

And wake th' historian's smile, and schoolboy's tears!

Majestic task! to join, though plac'd afar,

The things that have been, with the things that are!

Important trust! the awful dead, to

And teach mankind to moralize from man!

Stupendous charge! when, on the record true.

Depend the dead, and hang the living too! And, oh! thrice impious he, who dares

abuse That solemn charge, and good and ill

confuse! Thrice guilty he who, false with

" words of sooth:" Would pay, to Prejudice, his debt to

Truth: The hallow'd page of fleeting Time

profane, And prove to Man that man has liv'd

in vain: Pass the cold grave, with colder jest-

ings, by: And use the truth to illustrate a lie!

Let Gibbon's name be trac'd, in sor-

row, here,-Too great to spurn, too little to revere!

Who follow'd Reason, yet forgot her laws.

And found all causes, but the "great first Cause: "

The paths of time, with guideless foot-

steps, trod: Blind to the light of nature and of

God; Deaf to the voice, amid the past's dread hour,

Which sounds His praise, and chronicles His pow'r!

spread,

When Prejudice, with jaundiced organs, read.

In vain for us the polish'd periods flow.

The fancy kindles, and the pages glow:

When one bright hour, and startling transport past,

The musing soul must turn—to sigh

Still let the page be luminous and just, Nor private feeling war with public trust;

Still let the pen from narrowing views forbear.

And modern faction ancient freedom spare.

But, ah! too oft th' historian bends his mind

To flatter party—not to serve mankind:

To make the dead, in living feuds, engage,

And give all time, the feelings of his age.

Great Hume hath stoop'd the Stuarts' fame t' increase;

And ultra Mitford soar'd to libel Greece! (f)

Yet must the candid muse, impartial, learn

To trace the errors which her eyes discern:

View ev'ry side, investigate each part, And get the holy scroll of Truth by heart:

No blame misplac'd, and yet no fault forgot—

Like inkemploy'd to write with—not to blot.

Hence, while historians just reproof incur,
We find some readers, with their

we find some readers, with their authors, err;
And soon discover, that as few excel

In reading justly, as in writing well. For prejudice, or ignorance, is such, That men believe too little, or too much;

Too apt to cavil, or too glad to trust, With confidence misplac'd, or blame unjust.

Seek out no faction—no peculiar school—

But lean on Reason, as your safest rule. (g)

Let doubtful facts, with patient hand, be led.

To take their place on this Procrustean bed!

What, plainly, fits not, may be thrown aside,

Without the censure of pedantic pride:

For nature still, to just proportion, clings:

And human reason judges natural things.

Moréover, in th' historian's bosom look,

And weigh his feelings ere you trust his book;

His private friendships, private wrongs, descry,

Where tend his passions, where his int'rests lie—
And, while his proper faults your

mind engage,
Discern the ruling foibles of his age.

Hence, when on deep research, the work you find

A too obtrusive transcript of his mind;

When you perceive a fact too highly wrought,
Which kindly seems to prove a

fav'rite thought;
Or some opposing truth trac'd briefly

With hand of careless speed—then turn to doubt!

For private feeling, like the taper, glows,

And here a light, and there a shadow, throws.

If some gay picture, vilely daubed, were seen

Were seen
With glass of azure, and a sky of

Th' impatient laughter we'd suppress in vain,

And deem the painter jesting, or insane.

But, when the sun of blinding prejudice

Glares in our faces, it deceives our eyes;

Truth appears falsehood to the dazzled sight, The comment apes the fact, and black seems white ;

Commingled hues, their separate colours lost.

Dance wildly on, in bright confusion tost:

And, midst their drunken whirl, the giddy eve

Beholds one shapeless blot for earth and sky.

Of such delusions let the mind take

And learn to think, or wisely cease to

And, if a style of labour'd grace display

Perverted feelings, in a pleasing way; False tints, on real objects, brightly

Facts in disguise, and Truth in masquerade-

If cheating thoughts in beauteous dress appear,

With magic sound, to captivate the ear-

Th' enchanting poison of that page decline,

Or drink Circean draughts-and turn to swine!

We hail with British pride, and ready praise,

Enlightened Miller of our modern days! (h)

Too firm though temp'rate, liberal though exact,

To give too much to argument or fact, To love details, and draw no moral thence,

Or seek the comment, and forget the

He leaves all vulgar aims, and strives

To find the ways of Truth, and make them known!

Spirit of life! for aye, with heav'nly breath.

Warm the dull clay, and cold abodes of death!

Clasp in its urn the consecrated dust, And bind a laurel round the broken bust;

While 'mid decaying tombs, thy pensive choice.

Thou bid'st the silent utter forth a It bounds from dust, and bends its voice,

To prompt the actors of our busy scene.

And tell what is, the tale of what has been !

Yet turn, Philosophy! with brow sublime.

Shall Science follow on the steps of Time!

Thought's measureless o'er depths, we bend to hear

The whispered sound, which stole on Descartes' ear, (i)

Hallowing the sunny visions of his vouth

With that eternal mandate, "Search for Truth!"

Yes! search for Truth-the glorious path is free;

Mind shews her dwelling-Nature holds the key-

Yes! search for Truth-her tongue shall bid thee scan

The book of knowledge, for the use of Man!

Man! Man! thou poor antithesis of power!

Child of all time! yet creature of an hour!

By turns, chameleon of a thousand forms.

The lord of empires, and the food of worms!

The little conqueror of a petty space. The more than mighty, or the worse

than base! Thou ruin'd landmark, in the desert way,

Betwixt the all of glory, and decay! Fair beams the torch of Science in thine hand.

And sheds its brightness o'er the glimmering land;

While, in thy native grandeur, bold. and free,

Thou bid'st the wilds of nature smile for thee,

And treadest Ocean's paths full rovally!

Earth yields her treasures upcelestial air

Receives thy globe of life-when, journeying there,

course on high,

And walks, in beauty, through the wondering sky.

And yet, proud clay! thine empire is a span,

Nor all thy greatness makes thee more than man!

While Knowledge, Science, only serve t' impart

The god thou would'st be, and the thing thou art!

Where stands the Syracusan—while the roar

Of men, and engines, echoes through the shore?

Where stands the Syracusan? haggard Fate,

With ghastly smile, is sitting at the gate;

And Death forgets his silence 'midst the crash

Of rushing ruins—and the torches' flash

Waves redly on the straggling forms that die;

And masterless steeds, beneath that gleam, dart by,

Scared into madness, by the battle cry—

And sounds are hurtling in the angry air.

Of hate, and pain, and vengeance, and despair—

The smothered voice of babes—the long wild shriek

Of mothers—and the curse the dying speak!

Where stands the Syracusan? tranquil sage,

He bends, sublime, o'er Science' splendid page;

Walks the high circuit of extended mind, Surpasses man, and dreams not of

mankind;
While, on his listless ear, the battle

while, on his listless ear, the battle shout

Falls senseless—as if echo breath'd about

The hum of many words, the laughing glee,

Which linger'd there, when Syracuse was free.

Away! away! for louder accents fall— But not the sounds of joy from marble hall!

Quick steps approach—but not of sylphic feet,

Whose echo heralded a smile more sweet,

Coming, all sport, th' indulgent sage, t' upbraid

For lonely hours, to studious musing, paid—

Be hushed! Destruction bares the flickering blade!

He asked to live, th' unfinished lines to fill,

And died—to solve a problem deeper still.

He died, the glorious! who, with soaring sight, (j)

Sought some new world, to plant his foot of might;
Thereon, in solitary pride, to stand,

And lift our planet, with a master's hand!

He sank in death—Creation only gave
That thorn-encumbered space which
forms his grave—

An unknown grave, till Tully chanced to stray,

And named the spot where Archimedes lay!

Genius! behold the limit of thy power!
Thou fir'st the soul—but, when life's

dream is o'er,
Giv'st not the silent pulse one throb

the more:
And mighty beings come, and pass

Like other comets, and like other—clay.

Though analysing Truth must still divide

Historic state, and scientific pride; Yet one stale fact, our judging thoughts infer—

Since each is human, each is prone to err!

Oft, in the night of Time, doth History stray,

And lift her lantern, and proclaim it day!

And oft, when day's eternal glories shine,

Doth Science, boasting, cry—"The light is mine!"

So hard to bear, with unobstructed sight, (k)

treme of light.

Yet, to be just, though faults belong to each.

The themes of one, an humbler moral, teach:

And, 'midst th' historian's eloquence. and skill.

The human chronicler is human still. If on past power, his eager thoughts be cast,

It brings an awful antidote-'tis past!

If, deathless fame, his ravish'd organs scan.

The deathless fame exists for buried

Power, and decay, at once he turns to view:

And, with the strength, beholds the weakness too.

Not so, doth Science' musing son aspire;

And pierce creation, with his eye of

You mystic pilgrims of the starry way

No humbling lesson, to his soul, convey;

No tale of change, their changeless course hath taught:

And works divine excite no earthward thought.

And still, he, reckless, builds the splendid dream:

And still, his pride increases with his theme:

And still, the cause is slighted in th' effect:

And still, self-worship follows selfrespect.

Too apt to watch the engines of the scene.

And lose the hand, which moves the vast machine:

View Matter's form, and not its moving soul;

whole:

While, darkly musing 'twixt the earth and sky,

His heart grows narrow, as his hopes grow high;

Th' excess of darkness, or th' ex- The sympathies of earth, but not the dross;

Till Time sweeps down the fabric of his trust:

And life, and riches, turn to death, and dust.

And such is Man! 'neath Error's foul assaults.

His noblest moods beget his grossest faults!

When Knowledge lifts her hues of varied grace. The fair exotic of a brighter place,

To keep her stem, from mundane blasts, enshrin'd,

He makes a fatal hot-bed of his mind:

Too oft adapted, in their growth, to spoil

The natural beauties of a generous soil.

Ah! such is Man! thus strong, and weak withal,

His rise oft renders him too prone to fall ! The loftiest hills' fresh tints the

soonest fade: And highest buildings cast the deep-

est shade! So Buffon err'd; amidst his chilling

dream, (l)The judgment grew material as the

theme: Musing on Matter, till he called away

The modes of Mind, to form the modes of clay;

And made, confusing each, with judgment blind,

Mind stoop to dust, and dust ascend to Mind.

So Leibnitz err'd; when, in the starry hour,

He read no weakness, where was written, "Power;" Beheld the verdant earth, the cir-

cling sea; Interpret parts, and misconceive the Nor dreamt so fair a world could

cease to be! Yea! but he heard the Briton's awful

name, As, scattering darkness, in his might,

he came,

And quits, for aye, with unavailing Girded with Truth, and earnest to confute

What gave to Matter Mind's best attribute.

Sternly they strove—th' unequal race was run! (m)

The owlet met the eagle at the sun!

While such defects, their various forms, unfold:

And rust, so foul, obscures the brightest gold-

Let Science' soaring sons the ballast cast.

But judge their present errors by their past.

As some poor wanderer, in the darkness, goes,

When fitful wind, in hollow murmur. blows;

Hailing, with trembling joy, the lightning's ray,

Which threats his safety, but illumes his way.

Gross faults buy deep experience. Sages tell

That Truth, like Æsop's fox, is in a well:

And, like the goat his fable prates about,

Fools must stay in, that wise men may get out.

What thousand scribblers, of our age, would choose

To throw a toga round the English muse:

Rending her garb of ease, which graceful grew

From Dryden's loom, beprankt with varied hue!

In that dull aim, by Mind unsanctified.

What thousand Wits would have their wits belied. Devoted Southey! if thou had'st

not tried! (n) Use is the aim of Science; this the

The wise appreciate, and the good commend.

For not, like babes, the flaming torch, we prize, That sparkling lustre may attract

our eyes; But that, when evening shades impede the sight,

It casts, on objects round, a useful When they flow wider, shall they light.

Use is the aim of Science! give again A golden sentence to the faithful pen-

Dwell not on parts ! for parts contract the mind: (0)

And knowledge still is useless, when confined.

The yearning soul, enclosed in narrow bound.

May be ingenious, but is ne'er profound

Spoil'd of its strength, the fettered thought grows tame:

And want of air extinguishes the flame!

And as the sun, beheld in mid-day

Seems turned to darkness, as we strive to gaze:

So mental vigour, on one object, cast. That object's self becomes obscured at last.

'Tis easy, as Experience may aver, To pass from general to particular, But most laborious to direct the soul From studying parts, to reason on the whole:

Thoughts, train'd on narrow subjects, to let fall;

And learn the unison of each with

In Nature's reign a scale of life we

A scale of knowledge we behold in mind:

With each progressive link, our steps ascend.

And traverse all, before they reach the end;

Searching, while Reason's powers may farther go,

The things we know not, by the things we know.

But hold! methinks some sons of Thought demand,

"Why strive to form the Trajan's vase in sand?

Are Reason's paths so few, that Mind may call

Her finite energies, to tread them all? Lo! Learning's waves, in bounded channel, sweep;

run as deep?

Shall that broad surface, no dull shallow, hide,

Growing dank weeds of superficial pride?

Then Heaven may leave our giant powers alone;

Nor give each soul a focus of its own!

Nor give each soul a focus of its own! Genius bestows, in vain, the chosen page,

If all the tome, the minds of all engage!"

Nay! I reply—with free congenial breast,

Let each peruse the part, which suits him best!

But, lest contracting prejudice mislead,

Regard the context, as he turns to read!

Hence, liberal feeling gives th' enlighten'd soul,

The spirit, with the letter of the scroll.

With what triumphant joy, what glad surprise,

The dull behold the dulness of the wise!

What insect tribes of brainless impudence

Buzz round the carcase of perverted sense!

What railing idiots hunt, from classic school,

Each flimsy sage, and scientific fool, Crying, "'Tis well! we see the blest

Crying, "'Tis well! we see the blest effect

Of watchful night, and toiling intellect!"

Yet let them pause, and tremble—vainly glad;

For too much learning maketh no man mad! (p)

Too little dims the sight, and leads

us o'er The twilight path, where fools have

been before; With not enough of Reason's radiance

To track the footsteps, where those fools have been.

Divinest Newton! if my pen may shew A name so mighty, in a verse so low,—

Still let the sons of Science, joyful, claim

The bright example of that splendid name! Still let their lips repeat, my page

bespeak,
The sage how learned! and the man

The sage how learned! and the man how meek! (q)

Too wise, to think his human folly less;

Too great, to doubt his proper littleness;

Too strong, to deem his weakness past away;

Too high in soul, to glory in his clay: Rich in all nature, but her erring side:

Endow'd with all of Science—but its pride.

ANALYSIS OF THE SECOND BOOK

METAPHYSICS-Address to Metaphysicians-The most considerable portion of their errors conceived to arise from difficulties attending the use of words-That on one hand, thoughts become obscure without the assistance of language, while on the other, language from its material analogy deteriorates from spiritual meaning-Allusion to a probable mode of communication between spirits after death—That a limited respect. though not a servile submission, is due to verbal distinctions—Clearness of style peculiarly necessary to Metaphysical subjects-The graces of Composition not inconsistent with them-Plato, Bacon, Bolingbroke-The extremes into which Philosophers have fallen with regard to sensation, and reflection-Berkeley, Condillac—That subject briefly considered—Abstractions—Longinus. Burke, Price, Payne Knight—Blind submission to authorities deprecated -The Pythagorean saying opposed, and Cicero's unphilosophical asser-

and Cicero's unphilosophical assertion alluded to—That, however, it partakes of injustice to love Truth, and yet refuse our homage to the advocates of Truth—How the names of great writers become endeared to us by early recollections—Description of the School-boy's first intellectual

gratifications-That even without reference to the past, some immortal names are entitled to our veneration, since they are connected with Truth - Bacon - Apostrophe to

Poetry is introduced—More daring than Philosophy, she personifies abstractions, and brings the things unseen before the eve of the Mind-How often reason is indebted to poetic imagery—Irving—The poetry of prose—Plato's ingratitude—Philosophers and Poets contrasted-An attempt to define Poetry-That the passions make use of her language-Nature the poet's study-Shakespeare—Human nature as seen in cities—Scenic nature, and how the mind is affected thereby-That Poetry exists not in the object contemplated, but is created by the contemplating mind—The ideal—Observations on the structure of verse, as adapted to the subject treated-Milton, Horace, Pope-The French Drama-Corneille, Racine - Harmonv and chasteness of versification-The poem proceeds to argue that the muse will refuse her inspiration to a soul unattuned to generous sympathy, unkindled by the deeds of Virtue, or the voice of Freedom-Contemptuous notice of prompted only by interest to aspire to poetic eminence-What should be the Poet's best guerdon-From the contemplation of motives connected with Freedom, we are led by no unnatural transition to Greece-Her present glorious struggle-Anticipation of her ultimate independence, and the restoration of the Muses to their ancient seats-Allusion to the death of Byron-Reflections on Mortality-The terrors of death as beheld by the light of Nature-The consolations of death as beheld with reference to a future state-Contemplation of the immortality of Mind, and her perfected powers-Conclusion.

BOOK II

But now to higher themes! no more Rank pride does much! and yet wo confin'd

To copy Nature, Mind returns to Mind.

We leave the throng, so nobly, and so

Tracing, in Wisdom's book, things visible.-

And turn to things unseen: where, greatly wrought,

Soul questions soul, and thought revolves on thought.

My spirit loves, my voice shall hail ve, now,

Sons of the patient eye, and passionless brow!

Students sublime! Earth, man, unmov'd, ve view.

Time, circumstance; for what are they to you?

What is the crash of worlds,—the fall of kings.— When worlds and monarchs are such

brittle things! What the tost, shatter'd bark, that

blindly dares A sea of storm? Ye sketch the

wave which bears! The cause, and not th' effect, your

thoughts exact: The principle of action, not the act, -The soul! the soul! and, 'midst so

grand a task. Ye call her rushing passions, and ye ask

Whence are ye? and each mystic thing responds!

I would be all ye are—except those bonds!

Except those bonds l ev'n here is oft descried

The love to parts, the poverty of pride! Ev'n here, while Mind, in Mind's

horizon, springs, Her "native mud" is weighing on

her wings! Ev'n here, while Truth invites the ardent crowd.

Ixion-like, they rush t' embrace a cloud!

Ev'n here, oh! foul reproach to human wit!

A Hobbes hath reasoned, and Spinoza writ!

justly cry,

Our greatest errors in our weakness lie.

For thoughts uncloth'd by language are, at best,

Obscure; while grossness injures those exprest-

Through words,-in whose analysis, we find

Th' analogies of Matter, not of Mind: Hence, when the use of words is graceful brought,

physical dress to metaphysic thought.

The thought, howe'er sublime its pristine state,

Is by th' expression made degenerate; Its spiritual essence changed, or cramp'd; and hence

Some hold by words, who cannot hold by sense;

And leave the thought behind, and take th' attire-

Elijah's mantle—but without his fire! Yet spurn not words! 'tis needful to confess

They give ideas, a body and a dress! Behold them traverse Learning's region round,

The vehicles of thought on wheels of sound:

Mind's winged strength, wherewith the height is won,

Unless she trust their frailty to the

Destroy the body !-will the spirit stay?

Destroy the car!—will Thought pursue her way?

Destroy the wings !-let Mind their aid forego!

Do no Icarian billows vawn below? Ah! spurn not words with reckless insolence:

But still admit their influence with the sense.

And fear to slight their laws! Perchance we find No perfect code transmitted to

mankind: And yet mankind, till life's dark

sands are run, Prefers imperfect government to

none.

Thus Thought must bend to words! Nor in details, which schoolboys Some sphere of bliss,

Ere long, shall free her from th' allov of this:

Some kindred home for Mind-some holy place,

Where spirits look on spirits, "face to face."-

Where souls may see, as they themselves are seen,

And voiceless intercourse may pass between.

All pure—all free! as light, which doth appear

In its own essence, incorrupt and clear!

One service, praise! one age, eternal vouth!

One tongue, intelligence! one subject, truth!

Till then, no freedom, Learning's search affords,

Of soul from body, or of thought from words.

For thought may lose, in struggling to be hence,

The gravitating power of Commonsense: Through all the depths of space with

Phaeton hurl'd,

T' impair our reason, as he scorch'd our world.

Hence, this preceptive truth, my page affirms-

Respect the technicality of terms! Yet not in base submission—lest we

That, aiding clay, we crouch too low for Mind;

Too apt conception's essence to for-

get. And place all wisdom in the alphabet.

Still let appropriate phrase the sense invest:

That what is well conceived be well exprest!

Nor e'er the reader's wearied brain engage.

In hunting meaning down the mazy page.

With three long periods tortured into one,

The sentence ended, with the sense begun;

know by heart,

Perplex each turning with the terms of art.

To understand, we deem no common good;

And 'tis less easy to be understood.

But let not clearness be your only praise.

When style may charm a thousand different ways;

In Plato glow, to life and glory wrought,

By high companionship with no.

By high companionship with noblest thought;

In Bacon, warm abstraction with a breath,
Catch Poesy's bright beams and

Catch Poesy's bright beams, and smile beneath;

In St. John roll, a generous stream, along,

Correctly free and regularly strong. Nor scornful deem the effort out of place,

With taste to reason and convince with grace;

But ponder wisely, ere you know, too late.

Contempt of trifles will not prove us great!

The Cynics, not their tubs, respect engage;

And dirty tunic never made a sage,

E'en Cato—had he own'd the Senate's will,

And wash'd his toga—had been Cato still. (a)

Justly we censure—yet are free to own.

That indecision is a crime unknown. For, never faltering, seldom reasoning long,

And still most positive whene'er most wrong,

No theoretic sage is apt to fare

Like Mah'met's coffin—hung in middle air!

No! fenc'd by Error's all-sufficient trust,

These stalk "in nubibus"—those crawl in dust.

From their proud height, the first demand to know,

If spiritual essence should descend more low?

The last, as vainly, from their dunghill, cry,

Can body's grossness hope t' aspire more high?

And while Reflection's empire, these disclose,

Sensation's sovereign right is told by those.

Lo! Berkeley proves an old hypothesis!

"Out on the senses!" (he was out of his!)

"All is idea! and nothing real springs
But God, and Reason"—(not the
right of kings?) (b)

"Hold!" says Condillac with profound surprise—

"Why prate of Reason? we have ears and eyes!"

Condillac! while the dangerous periods fall

Upon thy page, to stamp sensation all;

While (coldly studious!) thine ingenious scroll (c)

Endows the mimic statue with a soul Compos'd of sense—behold the generous hound—

His piercing eye, his ear awake to sound,

His scent, most delicate organ! and declare

What triumph hath the "Art of Thinking" there! (d)

What Gall, or Spurzheim, on his front hath sought

The mystic bumps indicative of Thought?

Or why, if Thought do there maintain her throne,

Will reasoning curs leave logic for a bone?

Mind is imprison'd in a lonesome tower:

Sensation is its window—hence herb, flower,

Landscapes all sun, the rush of thousand springs,

Waft in sweet scents, fair sights, soft murmurings;

And in her joy, she gazeth—yet ere long,

Reason awaketh in her, bold and strong,

And o'er the scene exerting secret laws,

First seeks th' efficient, then the final cause,

Abstracts from forms their hidden accidents,

And marks in outward substance, inward sense.

Our first perceptions formed—we search, to find

The operations of the forming mind; And turn within by Reason's certain route,

To view the shadows of the things without

Discern'd, retain'd, compar'd, combin'd, and brought

To mere abstraction, by abstracting Thought.

Hence to discern, retain, compare, connect,

We deem the faculties of Intellect; The which, mus'd on, exert a new controul,

And fresh ideas are open'd on the soul.

Sensation is a stream with dashing spray,

That shoots in idle speed its arrowy way;

When lo! the mill arrests its waters' course,

Turning to use their unproductive force:

The cunning wheels by foamy currents sped,

Reflection triumphs,—and mankind is fed!

Since Pope hath shewn, and Learning still must shew.

"We cannot reason but from what we know,"—

Unfold the scroll of Thought; and turn to find

The undeceiving signature of Mind! There, judge her nature by her nature's course,

And trace her actions upwards to their source.

So when the property of Mind we call An essence, or a substance spiritual, We name her thus, by marking how she clings

Less to the forms than essences of things; For body clings to body—objects seen

to find corned—we impressions came,

Mind.

find;

Give single forms an universal name.

And substance sensible alone have

Sensation's study; while reflective

Essence unseen in objects seen may

And, tracing whence her known

So, when particular sounds in concord rise,

Those sounds as *melody*, we generalize;

When pleasing shapes and colours blend, the soul

Abstracts th' idea of beauty from the whole,

Deducting thus, by Mind's enchanting spell, The intellectual from the sensible.

Hence bold Longinus' splendid periods grew,

"Who was himself the great sublime he drew:" Hence Burke, the poet-reasoner.

Hence Burke, the poet-reasoner, learn'd to trace

His glowing style of energetic grace: Hence thoughts, perchance, some favour'd bosoms move,

Which Price might own, and classic Knight approve!

Go! light a rushlight, ere the day is done,

And call its glimm'ring brighter than the sun!

Go! while the stars in midnight glory beam,

Prefer their cold reflection in the stream!

But be not that dull slave, who only looks
On Reason, "through the spectacles

of books!"
Rather by Truth determine what is

true,—
And reasoning works, through Rea-

son's medium, view;
For authors can't monopolize her

light:
'Tis yours to read, as well as theirs

to write.
To judge is yours!—then why submissive call, (e)

"The master said so?"—'Tis no rule at all!

Shall passive sufferance e'en to mind Leant on the boyish hand—as, all the belong, When right divine in man is human

wrong?

Shall a high name a low idea enhance, When all may fail, as some succeed-

by chance? Shall fix'd chimeras unfix'd reason

shock? And if Locke err, must thousands

err with Locke? Men! claim your charter! spurn th' unjust controul,

And shake the bondage from the free-born soul!

Go walk the porticoes! and teach your youth All names are bubbles, but the name

of Truth!

If fools, by chance, attend to Wisdom's rules.

'Tis no dishonour to be right with

If human faults to Plato's page belong, (f)

Not ev'n with Plato, willingly go wrong.

But though the judging page declare it well

To love Truth better than the lips which tell:

Yet 'twere an error, with injustice class'd,

T' adore the former, and neglect the

Oh! beats there, Heav'n! a heart of human frame, Whose pulses throb not at some

kindling name?

Some sound, which brings high musings in its track,

Or calls perchance the days of childhood back, In its dear echo,—when, without a

sigh, Swift hoop, and bounding ball, were first laid by,

To clasp in joy, from school-room tyrant, free.

The classic volume on the little knee, And con sweet sounds of dearest minstrelsy,

Or words of sterner lore; the young brow fraught

With a calm brightness which might mimic thought,

while.

A half-heav'd sigh, or aye th' unconscious smile

Would tell how, o'er that page, the soul was glowing.

In an internal transport, past the knowing!

How feelings, erst unfelt, did then appear.

Give forth a voice, and murmur, "We are here!"

As lute-strings, which a strong hand plays upon;

Or Memnon's statue singing 'neath the sun. (g)

Ah me! for such are pleasant mem-

And call the tears of fondness to our eves

Reposing on this gone-by dreamwhen thus.

One marbled book was all the world to us:

The gentlest bliss our innocent thoughts could find-

The happiest cradle of our infant mind!

And though such hours be past, we shall not less Think on their joy with grateful

tenderness: And bless the page which bade our

reason wake,-And love the prophet, for his mis-

sion's sake. But not alone doth Memory's smouldering flame

Reflect a radiance on a glorious name;

For there are names of pride; and they who bear

Have walked with Truth, and turn'd their footsteps where

We walk not—their beholdings aye have been

O'er Mind's far countries which we have not seen-

Our thoughts are not their thoughts! —and oft we dream

That light upon the awful brow doth gleam,

From that high converse; as when Moses trod

Towards the people, from the mount of Cod,

His lips were silent, but his face was bright,

And prostrate Israel trembled at the sight.

What tongue can syllable our Bacon's name,

Nor own a heart exulting in his fame?
Where prejudice' wild blasts were wont to blow,

And waves of ignorance roll'd dark below.

He raised his sail—and left the coast behind,—

Sublime Columbus of the realms of Mind!

Dared folly's mists, opinion's treacherous sands,

And walk'd, with godlike step, th' untrodden lands!

But ah lour Muse of Britain, standing near, (h)

Hath dimm'd my tablet with a pensive tear!

Thrice, the proud theme, her freeborn voice essays,—

And thrice that voice is faltering in his praise—

Yea! till her eyes in silent triumph turn

To mark afar her Locke's sepulchral urn!

Oh urn! where students rapturous vigils keep,

Where sages envy, and where patriots weep! Oh Name! that bids my glowing

Oh Name! that bids my glowing spirit wake— To freemen's hearts endeared for

Freedom's sake! Oh soul! too bright in life's corrupt-

ing hour,
To rise by faction, or to crouch to

power! While radiant Genius lifts her heav'n-

ward wing,
And human bosoms own the Mind I

sing;
While British writers British thoughts
record,

And England's press is fearless as her sword;

While, 'mid the seas which gird our favor'd isle,

She clasps her charter'd rights with conscious smile;

So long be thou her glory, and her guide,

Thy page her study, and thy name her pride!

Oh! ever thus, immortal Locke, belong

First to my heart, as noblest in my song;
And since in thee, the muse enrap-

tured find
A moral greatness, and creating

mind, Still may thine influence, which

with honor'd light
Beams when I read, illume me as I
write!

The page too guiltless, and the soul too free,
To call a frown from Truth, or blush

from thee!

But where Philosophy would fear to soar,

Young Poesy's elastic steps explore! Her fairy foot, her daring eye pursues

The light of faith—nor trembles as she views!

Wont o'er the Psalmist's holy harp to hang,

And swell the sacred note when Milton sang; Mingling reflection's chords with

fancy's lays,
The tones of music with the voice of

The tones of music with the voice of praise!

And while Philosophy, in spirit, free, Reasons, believes, yet cannot plainly see,

Poetic Rapture, to her dazzled sight, Pourtrays the shadows of the things of light;

of light;
Delighting o'er the unseen worlds to roam,

And waft the pictures of perfection home.

Thus Reason oft the aid of fancy seeks.

And strikes Pierian chords—when Irving speaks! (i)

Oh! silent be the withering tongue of those

Who call each page, bereft of measure, prose;

Who deem the Muse possest of such faint spells,

That like poor fools, she glories in her bells :

Who hear her voice alone in tinkling chime,

And find a line's whole magic in its rhyme;

Forgetting, if the gilded shrine be fair, What purer spirit may inhabit there! For such, -indignant at her questioned might.

Let Genius cease to charm-and Scott to write!

Ungrateful Plato! o'er thy cradled rest. (i)

The Muse hath hung, and all her love exprest;

Thy first imperfect accents fondly taught,

And warm'd thy visions with poetic thought!

Ungrateful Plato ! should her deadliest foe

Be found within the breast she tended so?

Spoil'd of her laurels, should she weep to find

The best belov'd become the most unkind?

And was it well or generous, Brutus

To pierce the hand that gave the power to strike?

Sages, by reason, reason's powers direct;

Bards, through the heart, convince the intellect.

Philosophy majestic brings to view Mind's perfect modes, and fair proportions too:

Enchanting Poesy bestows the while. Upon its sculptured grace, her magic smile.

Bids the cold form, with living radiance glow,

And stamps existence on its marble brow!

For Poesy's whole essence, when defined.

Is elevation of the reasoning mind, When inward sense from Fancy's page

is taught, And moral feeling ministers to Thought.

And hence, the natural passions all agree

In seeking Nature's language—poetry. When Hope, in soft perspective, from afar.

Sees lovely scenes more lovely than they are;

To deck the landscape, tiptoe Fancy brings

Her plastic shapes, and bright imaginings.

Or when man's breast by torturing pangs is stung,

If fearful silence cease t' enchain his tongue,

In metaphor, the feelings seek relief. And all the soul grows eloquent with grief.

Poetic fire, like Vesta's, pure and bright.

Should draw from Nature's sun, its holy light.

With Nature, should the musing poet roam,

And steal instruction from her classic tome:

When 'neath her guidance, least inclin'd to err-The ablest painter when he copies her.

Beloved Shakespeare! England's dearest fame!

Dead is the breast that swells not at thy name!

Whether thine Ariel skim the seas along,

Floating on wings ethereil as his song-

Lear rave amid the tempest-or Macbeth

Question the hags of hell on midnight heath-

Immortal Shakespeare! still, thy lips impart

The noblest comment on the human heart.

And as fair Eve, in Eden newly placed, (k)

Gazed on her form, in limpid waters traced,

And stretch'd her gentle arms, with pleased surprise,

To meet the image of her own bright eyes-

So Nature, on thy magic page, survevs

Her sportive graces, and untutored ways !

she see.

Then laughing owns she loves herself in thee!

Shun not the haunts of crowded cities then:

Nor e'cr, as man, forget to study men! What though the tumult of the town intrude

On the deep silence, and the lofty mood:

'Twill make thy human sympathies rejoice,

To hear the music of a human voice-To watch strange brows by various reason wrought,

To claim the interchange of thought with thought;

T' associate mind with mind, for

Mind's own weal, As steel is ever sharpen'd best by

steel.

impassion'd bards, the scenic world is dear.—

But Nature's glorious masterpiece is here!

All poetry is beauty, but exprest

In inward essence, not in outward vest.

Hence lovely scenes, reflective poets find.

Awake their lovelier images in Mind: Nor doth the pictur'd earth, the bard invite.

The lake of azure, or the heav'n of light,

But that his swelling breast arouses

Something less visible, and much more fair!

There is a music in the landscape round,-

A silent voice, that speaks without a sound-

A witching spirit, that reposing near. Breathes to the heart, but comes not to the ear!

These softly steal, his kindling soul t' embrace,

And natural beauty, gild with moral

Think not, when summer breezes tell their tale,

The poet's thoughts are with the When Mind is all his own! her dear summer gale :

Wondering, the soft reflection doth Think not his Fancy builds her elfin dream

On painted floweret, or on sighing stream:

No single objects cause his raptured starts.

For Mind is narrow'd, not inspir'd by parts:

But o'er the scene the poet's spirit broods.

To warm the thoughts that form his noblest moods;

Peopling his solitude with faëry play. And beckoning shapes that whisper him away.

While lilied fields, and hedge-row blossoms white.

And hills, and glittering streams, are full in sight-

The forests wave, the joyous sun beguiles,

And all the poetry of Nature smiles! Such poetry is formed by Mind, and

By scenic grace of one peculiar spot.

The artist lingers in the moon-lit glade, (1)

And light and shade, with him, arelight and shade.

The philosophic chymist wandering there.

Dreams of the soil, and nature of the

The rustic marks the young herbs' fresh'ning hue,

And only thinks—his scythe may soon pass through!

None " muse on nature with a Poet's eye,"

None read, but Poets, Nature's poetry!

Its characters are trac'd in mystic hand.

And all may gaze, but few can understand.

Nor here alone the Poet's dwelling Though Beauty's voice perchance is

sweetest here! Bind not his footsteps to the sylvan

scene,

To heathy banks, fair woods, and valleys green.

impress

Shall throw a magic o'er the wilderness.

As o'er the blossoming vale, and aye recall

Its shadowy plane, and silver waterfall,

Or sleepy crystal pool, reposing by, To give the earth a picture of the

Such, gazed on by the spirit, are, I ween,

Lovelier than ever prototype was seen:

For Fancy teacheth Memory's hand to trace (m)

Nature's ideal form in Nature's place.

In every theme by lofty Poet sung, The thought should seem to speak,

and not the tongue.
When godlike Milton lifts th' exalted

song, The subject bears the burning words

along—
Resounds the march of Thought, th'
o'erflowing line,

Full cadence, solemn pause, and strength divine!

strength divine! When Horace chats his neighbour's

faults away,
The sportive measures, like his muse,
are gay;

For once Good-humour Satire's byway took,

And all his soul is laughing in his book!

On moral Pope's didactic page is found,

Sound rul'd by sense, and sense made clear by sound;

The power to reason, and the taste to please,

While, as the subject varies in degrees,

He stoops with dignity, and soars with ease.

Hence let our Poets, with discerning glance,

Forbear to imitate the stage of France. What though Corneille arouse the thrilling chords,

And walk with Genius o'er th' inspirëd boards;

What though his rival bring, with calmer grace,

The classic unities of time and place,—

All polish, and all eloquence—'twere mean

To leave the path of Nature for Racine;

When Nero's parent, 'midst her woe, defines

The wrong that tortures—in two hundred lines:

Or when Orestes, madden'd by his crime,

Forgets life, joy, and every thing—but rhyme.

While thus to character and nature, true,

Still keep the harmony of verse in view,

Yet not in changeless concord,—it should be

Though graceful, nervous—musical, though free;

Not clogg'd by useless drapery, not beset

By the superfluous word, or epithet, Wherein Conception only dies in state, (n)

As Draco, smother'd by the garments' weight—

But join, Amphion-like (whose magic fire

Won the deep music of the Maian lyre,

To call Bœotia's city from the ground),

The just in structure, with the sweet in sound.

Nor this the whole—the poet's classic strain

May flow in smoothest numbers, yet in vain;

And Taste may please, and Fancy sport awhile,

And yet Aonia's muse refuse to smile! For lo! her heavenly lips these words reveal—

"The sage may coldly think, the bard must feel!

And if his writings, to his heart untrue.

Would ape the fervent throb it never knew;

If generous deeds, and Virtue's noblest part,

And Freedom's voice, could never warm that heart;

If Interest tax'd the produce of the brain.

And fetter'd Genius follow'd in her train.

Weeping as each unwilling word she spoke.-

Then hush the lute-its master string is broke!

In vain, the skilful hand may linger o'er-

Concord is dead, and music speaks no more!"

There are, and have been such—they were forgot

If shame could veil their page, if tears could blot!

There are, and have been, whose dishonour'd lav

Aspired t' enrapture that the world might-pay!

Whose life was one long bribe, oft counted o'er .-

Brib'd to think on, and brib'd to think no more;

Brib'd to laugh, weep, nor ask the reason why; Brib'd to tell truth, and brib'd to gild

a lie!

Oh Man! for this, the sensual left behind.

We boast our empire o'er the vast of Mind?

Oh Mind! reported valueless, till sold,

Thought dross till metamorphos'd into gold

By Midas' touch—breath'st thou immortal verse

To throw a ducat in an empty purse-To walk the market at a bellman's

For knaves to sell, and wond'ring fools to buy? Can Heav'n-born bards, undone by

lucre's lust. Crouch thus, like Heav'n-born min-

isters, to dust? Alas I to dust indeed—vet wherefore

blame? They keep their profits, though they lose their fame.

Leave to the dross they seek, the grovelling throng,

And swell with nobler aim th' Aonian In thee, my Fancy's pleasant walks song!

Enough for thee uninfluenc'd and unhir'd.

If Truth reward the strain herself inspir'd! Enough for thee, if grateful Man com-

mend. If Genius love, and Virtue call thee

friend ! Enough for thee, to wake th' exalted

mood. Reprove the erring, and confirm the good:

Excite the tender smile, the generous tear.

Or rouse the thought to loftiest Nature dear.

Which rapturous greets amidst the fervent line.

Thy name, O Freedom! glorious Hellas, thine!

I love my own dear land-it doth reioice

The soul, to stretch my arms, and lift my voice,

To tell her of my love! I love her green And bowery woods, her hills in mossy

sheen. Her silver running waters—there's no

spot In all her dwelling, which my breast

loves not-No place not heart-enchanted! Sun-

nier skies, And calmer waves, may meet another's eyes;

I love the sullen mist, the stormy sea. The winds of rushing strength which, like the land, are free!

Such is my love—yet turning thus to thee,

Oh Græcia! I must hail with hardly

Of joy, and pride, and deepening tenderness, And feelings wild, I know not to con-

troul, My other country—country of my

soul! For so, to me, thou art! my lips have

sung Of thee with childhood's lisp, and harp unstrung!

have been.

Telling her tales, while Memory went between !

And now for thee 1 joy, with heart beguiled

As if a dving friend looked up, and smiled

Lo! o'er Ægæa's waves, the shout hath ris'n!

Lo! Hope hath burst the fetters of her prison!

And Glory sounds the trump along the shore.

And Freedom walks where Freedom walk'd before!

Ipsara glimmers with heroic light. Redd'ning the waves that lash her flaming height;

And Ægypt hurries from that dark blue sea !

Lo! o'er the cliffs of fam'd Thermopylæ,

And voiceful Marathon, the wild winds sweep,

Bearing this message to the brave who sleep-

"They come! they come! with their embattled shock.

From Pelion's steep, and Paros' foamdash"d rock!

They come from Tempe's vale, and Helicon's spring,

And proud Eurotas' banks, the river king!

They come from Leuctra, from the waves that kiss

Athena-from the shores of Salamis: From Sparta, Thebes, Eubœa's hills of blue-

To live with Hellas-or to sleep with you!"

Smile-smile, beloved land! and though no lay

From Doric pipe may charm thy glades to-day-

Though dear Ionic music murmur not Adown the vale-its echo all forgot! Yet smile, beloved land! for soon, around.

Thy silent earth shall utter forth a sound.

As whilom—and, its pleasant groves among,

The Grecian voice shall breathe the For which we toil—to which our Grecian song,

While the exiled muse shall 'habit still

The happy haunts of her Parnassian hill

Till then, behold the cold dumb sepulchre-

The ruin'd column-ocean, earth, and air.

Man, and his wrongs—thou hast Tyrtæus there! (o)

And pardon, if across the heaving

Sound the far melody of minstrel

In wild and fitful gust from England's shore.

For his immortal sake, who never

Shall tread with living foot, and spirit free.

Her fields, or breathe her passionate poetry-

The pilgrim bard, who lived, and died for thee,

Oh land of Memory! loving thee no

Than parent—with the filial tender-And holy ardour of the Argive son.

Straining each nerve to bear thy chariot on-Till when its wheels the place of glory

swept.

He laid him down before the shrine —and slept. (p)

So be it! at his cold unconscious bier. We fondly sate, and dropp'd the natural tear-

Yet wept not wisely, for he sank to

On the dear earth his waking thoughts loved best.

And gently life's last pulses stole away!

No Moschus sang a requiem o'er his clay, (q)

But Greece was sad! and breathed above, below,

The warrior's sigh, the silence, and the woe!

And is this all? Is this the little

glories come ?

Doth History bend her mouldering pages o'er.

And Science stretch her bulwark from the shore.

And Sages search the mystic paths of Thought,

And Poets charm with lays that Genius taught—

For this? to labour through their little day,

To weep an hour, then want the tear they pay—

To ask the urn, their death and life to tell,

When the dull dust would give that tale as well!

Man! hast thou seen the gallant vessel sweep,

Borrowing her moonlight from the jealous deep,

And gliding with mute foot, and silver wing,

Over the waters like a soul-mov'd thing?

Man, hast thou gazed on this—then look'd again.

And seen no speck on all that desolate main.

And heard no sound,—except the gurgling cry,

The winds half stifled in their mockery?

Woe unto thee! for, thus, thy course is run,

And, in the fulness of thy noon-day sun,

The darkness cometh—yea! thou walk'st abroad

In glory, Child of Mind, Creation's Lord—

And wisdom's music from thy lips hath gush'd!

Then comes the Selah! and the voice is hush'd, (r)

And the light past! we seek where thou hast been

In beauty—but thy beauty is not seen!

We breathe the air thou breath'dst, we tread the spot

Thy feet were wont to tread, but find thee not!

Beyond, sits Darkness with her haggard face,

Brooding fiend-like above thy burying-place—

Beneath, let wildest Fancytake her fill!
Shall we seek on? we shudder, and
are still!

Yet woe not unto thee, thou child of Earth!

Though moonlight sleep on thy deserted hearth,

We will not cry "Alas!" above thy clay!

It was, perchance, thy joyous pride to stray

On Mind's lone shore, and linger by

On Mind's lone shore, and linger by the way:

But now thy pilgrim's staff is laid aside,

And on thou journeyest o'er the sullen tide,

To bless thy wearied sight, and glad thine heart

With all that Mind's serener skies impart:

Where Wisdom suns the day no shades destroy,

And Learning ends in Truth, as hope in joy:

While we stand mournful on the desert beach,

And wait, and wish, thy distant bark, to reach,

And weep to watch it, passing from our sight,

And sound the gun's salute, and sigh our last "good-night!"

And oh! while thus the spirit glides away,—
Give to the world its memory with its

clay! Some page our country's grateful eyes

may scan;
Some useful truth to bless surviving

man; Some name to honest bosoms justly

dear;
Some grave t' exalt the thought, and

claim the tear;
So when the pilgrim Sun is travelling
o'er

The last blue hill, to gild a distant shore.

He leaves a freshness in the evening scene,

That tells Creation where his steps have been!

NOTES TO BOOK I

NOTE (a).

And peeps at glory from some ancient's back.

"The reason which the learned Bentlev gave his daughter for not himself becoming an original writer, instead of wasting his talents on the works of others, is probably the cause of many not attempting original composition. Bentley seemed embarrassed at her honest question, and remained for a considerable time thoughtful. At length he observed -'Child, I am sensible I have not always turned my talents to the proper use for which they were given me; yet I have done something: but the wit and genius of the old authors beguiled me, and as I despaired of raising myself up to their standard upon fair ground, I thought the only chance I had of looking over their heads was to get upon their shoulders."-Curiosities of Literature, Vol. I.

NOTE (b).

The gentle Cowley of our native clime. List'd his first accents in Aönian rhyme.

A volume of Cowley's poems was published in his fifteenth year; and contains "The Tragical History of Pyramus and Thisbe," written in his tenth.

NOTE (c).

Alfieri's startling muse tun'd not her strings,

And dumbly look'd "unutterable things:" Till when five lustrums o'er his head had past,

This Poet's great mind exhibited no precocity. His "Cleopatra," written at the age of twenty-five years, first dis-covered its author's dramatic genius to himself, and to the world. ["Six lustrums" in text here corrected by authoress to "five."]

NOTE (d).

See, in that breathless crowd, Olorus stand, While one fair boy hangs, list ning, on his hand-

The young Thucydides!

It is said that Thucydides, in early youth, was present at the Olympic games when Herodotus recited his History; and that a burst of tears spoke his admiration. "Take care of that boy!" observed the sage turning to Olorus, "he will one day make a great man!"

NOTE (e).

That hail "th' eternal city" in their pride. "Imperium sine fine dedi," says Virgil's Jupiter. How little did the writer of judge of the reality of the merit.

those four words dream of their surviving the Glory, whose eternity they were intended to predict! Horace too, in the most exulting of his odes, boldly proclaims that his fame will live as long as

" Capitolium Scandet cum tacità virgine Pontifex."

Yes! his fame will live!—but where now is the Pontifex, and the silent vestal? where now is the Capitol? Such passages are, to my mind, pre-eminently more affecting than all the ruins in the world!

NOTE (f).

And ultra Mittord soar'd to libel Greece.

Mr. Mitford's acknowledged learning, and accuracy in detail, have a claim on our consideration, which we admit with readiness and pleasure; but prejudices, arising probably from early habits and associations, have deformed his work. He is evidently so afraid of taking the mob for the people, that he constantly takes the people for the mob-a perversion much in vogue among despots of Europe, in the nineteenth century. He considers the Athenian Democracy as he would a classical kind of Radicalism; and generously endows Philip of Macedon with a "right divine," not only over his own possessions, but over those of his neighbours. Mr. Mitford lets his readers look at facts: but, whether shortsighted as himself or not, he will not allow them to enjoy that privilege unless they make use of his political glasses; which, by the way, are No. 20,-" ne plus ultra!

NOTE (g).

But lean on Reason, as your safest rule. Let doubtful facts, with patient hand, be led. To take their place on this Procrusieun bed!

We shall find some clever and animated observations on this subject, in Voltaire's preface to his "Charles XII." I should extract them, but the book is too well known for me to doubt their having come to the knowledge of most readers: and a new publication is perhaps the only place, in which we are not glad to meet an old acquaintance.

NOTE (h).

Enlighten'd Miller of our modern days!

Those who may think this praise excessive are referred to the "Philosophy of Modern History," given to the world by Dr. Miller; and thence are requested to Note (i).

The whispered sound, which stole on Descartes' ear,

Hallowing the sunny visions of his youth With that eternal mandate, "Search for Truth!"

"Descartes, when young, and in a country seclusion, his brain exhausted by meditation, and his imagination heated to excess, heard a voice in the air which called him to pursue the search of Truth: he never doubted the vision, and this dream, in the delirium of Genius, charmed him even in his after studies."—D'Israeli's "Literary Character."

NOTE (j).

He died, the glorious! who, with soaring sight,

Sought some new world, to plant his foot of might;

Archimedes wrote to Hiero, that, if he had another world to stand on, he could move this by the power of his machinery. When Cicero stumbled on his grave, he found it, "Septum undique et vestitum vepribus et dumetis." What a homily!

NOTE (k).

So hard to bear, with unobstructed sight, Th' excess of darkness, or th' extreme of light.

Gray ingeniously asks, "Must I plunge into metaphysics?" (he might in some cases have said history)—"Alas! I cannot see in the dark; Nature has not furnished me with the optics of a cat. Must I pore upon mathematics? Alas! I cannot see in too much light; I am no eagle."

NOTE (1).

So Buffon erred; amidst his chilling dream, The judgment grew material as the theme:

Buffon was a materialist upon principle, though a Catholic by observance. Upon reading a poem on the immortality of the soul, he exclaimed—"Religion would be a noble present if this were true."

NOTE (m).

Sternly they strove—th' unequal race was

Leibnitz attacked with violence Sir Isaac Newton's opinion, that the seeds of mortality would be developed in the fabric of the miverse if unrenewed by its divine Maker. Such an opinion he considered "impious;" and, in opposition to it, maintained, that as Creation proceeded from the hand of Perfection, it is perfect—and as perfect, immutable.

Note (n).

Devoted Southey ! if thou had'st not tried!

Few are ready to bear a more respectful tribute to Dr. Southey's poetical talents than the writer of this Work, who however begs to be allowed to admire his genius, without extending that admiration either to his politics or Hexameters.

. Note (0).

Dwell not on parts! for parts contract the mind;

Lord Bacon thus expresses himself—"Sciences distinguished have a dependence upon universal knowledge, to be augmented, and rectified by the superior light thereof; as well as the parts and members of a science have upon the maxims of the same science, and the mutual light and consent which one part receiveth of another."—Interpretatio Natura.

Note (p).

For too much learning maketh no man mad!

Perhaps, after all, the great danger of knowing is in not knowing enough; and certainly "il pie fermo" is not "il piu basso." "It is true," says Lord Bacon, "that a little philosophy inclineth men's minds to atheism, but depth in philosophy bringeth their minds about to religion. This is an acute observation, and if generalized will be found equally so. errors attending Intellectual Elevation I have alluded to and allowed; but that elevation is only comparative. on Alps arise!" and the ars longa vita brevis prevents our attaining the topmost height. In our progress towards it then is our risk—lest we rejoice to have gone a yard, without remembering we have a mile to go. Like the princess, in the pretty Arabian tale, who was ascending the mountain in search of her talking bird and golden water, if during the ascent we turn back to gaze, we are transformed into black stones-capable of impeding others, though not of advancing ourselves.

NOTE (q).

The sage how learned! and the man how meek!

The character of Sir Isaac Newton forms a sublime comment on the foregoing note. "I don't know," said that greatest and humblest of men, "what I may seem to the world; but as to myself, I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the sea-shore, and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble, er a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the

great ocean of Truth lay all undiscovered before me."-We find the anecdote in

NOTES TO BOOK II.

NOTE (a).

F'en Cato-had he own'd the Senate's will, And wash'd his toga—had been Cato still.

Plutarch relates that Cato Uticensis was thought to disgrace the Prætorship by the meanness of his dress. To couple "disgrace" with the name of Cato revolts the soul; and yet who would call his "exigua toga" a proof of the loftiness of his virtue, or think him less a patriot if he had kept on his shoes?

NOTE (b).

"All is idea! and nothing real springs But God, and Reason-" (not the right of kings?)

An obvious question. Pyrrho the Elean, founder of the Ideal Philosophy, on the near approach of carts and carriages, did not think it worth while to turn aside, or change his posture. Dr. Berkeley, with less consistency, but more prudence, found time (and conscience) to write three sermons in vindication of passive obedience.

NOTE (c).

While (coldly studious!) thine ingenious scroll

Endows the mimic statue with a soul Compos'd of sense-

It is the object of Condillac's work, "Sur la Sensation," to prove "que la réflexion n'est dans son principe que la sensation même," and that our ideas are only sensation transformed. His statue is very cleverly put together, but is a statue after all.

NOTE (d).

What triumth hath the "Art of Thinking" there!

"L'Art de Penser"-title to one of Condillac's works.

NOTE (e).

To judge is yours!—then why submissive call

"The master said so?"

An "argumentum ad verecundiam" used by the Pythagoreans. I so much admire a passage in Plato's Phædo, illustrative of these lines, that the reader must forgive my referring to it. Cebes supports with animation an opinion in opposition to Socrates, who, turning a It is with regard to his writings that I gratified countenance ("ἤσθῆναί τε μοι cannot avoid expressing a regret, and I εδοξε," says the narrator) to his other do so reverentially, that pages so glorious

disciples, benignly observes-"Cebes always looks into principles; neither will he admit, without examination, the sentiments of any man.'

We find in Dr. Reid the following striking precept-"Let us, as becomes philosophers, lay aside authority."

NOTE (f).

If human faults to Pato's page belong, Not ev'n with Plato, lwillingly go wrong.

Cicero's assertion, "errare mehercule malo cum Platone quam cum istis vera sentire," is more boldly said than singularly thought. How many are there, among the canaille of readers, prepared to praise an inferior volume, with the Waverley magic on its title-page; to commend a commonplace by Rogers, or a far-fetched allusion by Moore! Even among the more critical of us, have the names of Scott, and Moore, and Rogers, no secret influence? Do we not so devoutly admire the noisy slippered Venus, that at length we begin to reverence, abstractedly, the noisy slippers? This is so, and I will not quarrel with it: since to forget the trifling faults of a great writer, is the gratitude we owe to his perfections. But what, in subjects of taste and sentiment, may be tolerated as pardonable enthusiasm, must in grave discussion, be condemned as unpardonable weakness. If therefore we judge Cicero only by the above-cited passage, we shall pronounce him to be a good Platonist (in one sense of the word), but a very bad philosopher. It is not with him, "Amicus Plato sed magis amica veritas:" he loves truth less than he loves Plato.

NOTE (g).

Or Memnon's statue singing 'neath the sun.

The statue of Memnon, the Ethiopian king, was said to utter musical sounds at the rising of the sun. Strabo witnessed this singular phenomenon, but could only explain it by conjecture.

NOTE (h).

But, ah! our Muse of Britain, standing near. Hath dimm'd my tablet with a pensive tear !

It is a practice too common, but manifestly unjust, to visit on the memory of distinguished authors their individual failings. I wish therefore to state expressly, that the Muse of Britain is not here supposed to animadvert on Lord Bacon's character as a statesman, with which she has nothing to do in this place.

should be polluted by passages so servile. "As men, we share his fame"—as Englishmen, we feel his degradation. If indeed the "Novum Organum," and "Advancement of Learning," kindled our souls into a less proud consciousness of intellectual dignity, we might better brook hearing a king called "a mortal god upon earth," and James the First compared to Solomon. But Lord Bacon first teaches us how high Philosophy can soar, and then how low a philosopher can stoop.

Note (i).

And strikes Pierian chords—when Irving speaks!

There is a pleasure in being benefitted by the labours of Genius: there is a pride in possessing powers capable of benefitting. The pride Mr. Irving may justly feel; and which of his readers, or hearers, cannot boast the pleasure? It gratifies me to be enabled to express in this place my admiration of his talents, and my respect for their direction.

Note (j).
Ungrateful Plato! o'er thy cradled rest,
The Muse hath hung, and all her love
exprest;

Plato wrote poetry in his youth; and when indeed did not Plato write poetry? Longinus numbers him among the imitators of Homer—"Πάντων δὲ τούτων μάλιστα δι Ιλάτων ἀπό τοῦ 'Ομηρικοῦ ἐκείνου νάματος εἰς αυτὸν μυρίας ὅσας παρατρόπας ἀποχετευσάμενος."

NOTE (k).

And as fair Eve, in Eden newly placed, Gazed on her form, in limpid waters traced,

The reader will here perceive an allusion to that beautiful passage in "Paradise Lost," book the fourth, where Eve describes to Adam her emotions on first beholding her own reflection in "the clear smooth lake"—

"A shape within the watery gleam appeared, Bending to look on me—I started back— It started back," etc.

NOTE (1).

The artist lingers in the moon-lit glade, And light and shade, with him, are—light and shade.

"Quam multa vident Pictores in umbris et eminentia quæ nos von videmus," is the motto to Mr. Price's admirable essay on the Picturesque. Dugald Stewart proposes its reversion—" Quam multa videmus nos quæ Pictores non vident," which if it be as true as ingenious, will go a great way in assisting my positiou.

NOTE (m).

Nature's ideal form in Nature's place.

Lord Bacon says of Poetry, that "it was ever thought to have some participation of divineness, because it doth raise and erect the mind, by submitting the shews of things to the desires of the mind; whereas Reason doth buckle and bow the mind unto the nature of things."

—Advancement of Learning, Book 2.

Note (n).

Wherein Conception only dies in state,
As Draco, smother'd by the garments'
weight—

The Athenian People being accustomed to testify their approbation by the casting of their garments on the approved individual, Draco was honourably smothered through excess of popularity.

NOTE (0).

behold the cold dumb sepulchre—
The ruin'd column—ocean, earth, and air,
Man, and his wrongs—thou hast Tyrtaus

The inspiriting effect of the productions of this Greek Poet, during the war between the Lacedæmonians and Messenians, is well known.

Note (p).

He laid him down before the shrine—and

Herodotus relates of Cleobis and Bito, Argive brothers, that on a festival of Juno they themselves, in default of oxen, drew the chariot of the priestess, their mother, forty-five stadia to the temple. Amidst the shouts of an admiring multitude, their grateful parent asked of the gods the best boon mortals could receive, wherewith to reward the piety of her sons. The young men fell asleep within the temple, and woke no more.

NOTE (q).

No Moschus sang a requiem o'er his clay, That exquisite effusion of Moschus over the grave of Bion, his "vatis amici" his brother in poetry and love—will occur to the reader's recollection.

NOTE (r).

Then comes the Selah! and the voice is hush'd,

Respecting this Hebrew word, which is found "seventy times in the Psalms, and three times in Habakkuk," Calmet observes—"One conjecture is, that it means the end or a pause, and that the ancient musicians put it occasionally in the margin of their psalters, to shew where a musical pause was to be made, and where the tune ended."

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

1826

DAY

" Causa fuit Pater his."-Hor.

AMIDST the days of pleasant mirth. That throw their halo round our earth:

Amidst the tender thoughts that rise To call bright tears to happy eyes; Amidst the silken words that move To syllable the names we love; There glides no day of gentle bliss More soothing to the heart than this ! No thoughts of fondness e'er appear More fond, than those I write of here! No name can e'er on tablet shine, My father! more beloved than thine!

Tis sweet, adown the shady past, A lingering look of love to cast— Back th' enchanted world to call, That beamed around us first of all: And walk with Memory fondly o'er The paths where Hope had been before-

Sweet to receive the sylphic sound That breathes in tenderness around, Repeating to the listening ear The names that made our childhood

dear-For parted Joy, like Echo, kind, Will leave her dulcet voice behind, To tell, amidst the magic air, How oft she smiled and lingered there. Oh! let the deep Aonian shell Breathe tuneful numbers, clear and

While the glad Hours, in fair array, Lead on this buxom Holiday; And Time, as on his way he springs, Hates the last bard who gave him wings;

For 'neath thy gentleness of praise, My Father! rose my early lays! And when the lyre was scarce awake, I loved its strings for thy loved sake; Wooed the kind Muses-but the while Thought only how to win thy smile— My proudest fame—my dearest pride-

More dear than all the world beside!

TO MY FATHER ON HIS BIRTH- | And now, perchance, I seek the tone For magic that is more its own: But still my Father's looks remain The best Mæcenas of my strain: My gentlest joy, upon his brow To read the smile, that meets me now-

To hear him, in his kindness, say The words—perchance he'll speak to-

SPENSERIAN STANZAS

ON A BOY OF THREE YEARS OLD CHILD of the sunny lockes and beautifull brow!

In thoughtfull tendernesse I gaze on thee-

Upon thy daintie cheek Expression's glow

Daunceth in tyme to thine heart's melodie;

Ne mortall wight mote lovelier urchin see!

Nathlesse it teens this pensive brest of mine

To think-belive the innocent revelrie

Shall be eclipsed in those soft blue evne-

Whenso the howre of youth no more for thee shall shine

Ah me! eftsoons thy childhood's pleasaunt dais Shall fly away, and be a whilome

thing! And sweetest mearimake, and

birthday lais Be recked not of, except when memories bring

Feres to their embers with awaking wing,

To make past love rejoyce thy tender sprite,

Albeit the toyles of daunger thee enring!

Child of the wavy lockes and brow of light-

Then be thy conscience pure, as now thy face is bright.

ethics of

VERSES TO MY BROTHER

"For we were nursed upon the self-same hilt."
—Lycidas.

I will write down thy name, and when 'tis writ.

Will turn me from the hum that mortals keep

In the wide world without, and gaze on it!

It telleth of the past—calling from sleep

Such dear, yet mournful thoughts, as make us smile, and weep.

Belov'd and best! what thousand feelings start,

As o'er the paper's course my fingers move—

My brother! dearest, kindest as thou art!

How can these lips my heart's affection prove?

I could not speak the words, if words could speak my love.

Together have we passed our infant hours,

Together sported Childhood's spring away,

Together culled young Hope's fast budding flowers,

To wreathe the forehead of each coming day!

Yes! for the present's sun makes e'en the future gay.

And when the langhing mood was nearly o'er,
Together, many a minute did we

wile On Horace' page, or Maro's sweeter

lore; While one young critic, on the

classic style,
Would sagely try to frown, and make
the other smile.

But now alone thou con'st the

ancient tome—
And sometimes thy dear studies,
it may be,

Are crossed by dearer dreams of me and home!

Alone I muse on Homer—thoughts

And if mine often stray, they go in search of thee!

I may not praise thee here—I will not bless!

Yet all thy goodness doth my memory bear,

Cherished by more than Friendship's tenderness—

And, in the silence of my evening prayer,

Thou shalt not be forgot—thy dear name shall be there!

STANZAS ON THE DEATH OF LORD BYRON.

---- λέγε πᾶσιν ἀπώλετο.--Bion.

——" I am not now That which I have been."—Childe Harold.

He was, and is not! Græcia's trembling shore,

Sighing through all her palmy groves, shall tell

That Harold's pilgrimage at last is o'er—

Mute the impassioned tongue, and tuneful shell,

That erst was wont in noblest strains to swell—

Hushed the proud shouts that rode Ægæa's wave!

For lo! the great Deliv'rer breathes farewell!

Gives to the world his mem'ry and a grave—

Expiring in the land he only lived to save!

Mourn, Hellas, mourn! and o'er thy widow'd brow,

For aye, the cypress wreath of sorrow twine;

And in thy new-form'd beauty, desolate, throw

The fresh-cull'd flowers on his sepulchral shrine.

Yes! let that heart whose fervour was all thine.

In consecrated urn lamented be! That generous heart where genius thrill'd divine,

Hath spent its last most glorious throb for thee,

Then sank amid the storm that made thy children free!

Britannia's Poet! Græcia's hero, sleeps!

And Freedom, bending o'er the breathless clay,

Lifts up her voice, and in her anguish weeps!

For us, a night hath clouded o'er our day,

And hush'd the lips that breath'd our fairest lay.

Alas! and must the British lyre resound

A requiem, while the spirit wings away

Of him who on its strings such music found,

And taught its startling chords to give so sweet a sound!

The theme grows sadder—but my soul shall find

A language in these tears! No more—no more!

Soon, 'midst the shrickings of the tossing wind,

The "dark blue depths" he sang of, shall have bore

Our all of Byron to his native shore! His grave is thick with voices—to the ear

Murm'ring an awful tale of greatness o'er;

But Memory strives with Death, and lingering near,

Shall consecrate the dust of Harold's lonely bier!

MEMORY

My Fancy's steps have often strayed To some fair vale the hills have made; Where sparkling waters travel o'er, And hold a mirror to the shore; Winding with murmurings in and out, To find the flowers which grow about. And there, perchance, in childhood

bold,
Some little elf, four summers old,
Adown the vales may chance to run,
To hunt his shadow in the sun!
But when the waters meet his eyes,
He starts and stops with glad surprise,
And shouts, with merry voice, to view
The banks of green, the skies of blue,
Th' inverted flocks that bleating go,
Lilies, and trees of apple blow,
Seeming so beautiful below!

He peeps above—he glances round, And then looks down, and thinks he's found

Reposing in the stream, to woo one, Aworld ev'n lovelier than the true one.

Thus, with visions gay and light, Hath Fancy lov'd my page to dight; Yet Thought hath, through a vista, seen

Something less frivolous, I ween: Then, while my chatting pen runs on, I'll tell you what she dreamt upon.

Memory's the streamlet of the scene, Which sweeps the hills of Life between;

And, when our walking hour is past, Upon its shore we rest at last; And love to view the waters fair, And see lost joys depictured there.

My ——, when thy feet are led
To press those banks we all must
tread—

May Virtue's smile and Learning's praise

Adorn the waters to thy gaze;
And, o'er their lucid course, be lent
The sunshine of a life well spent!
Then, if a thought should glad thy
breast

Of those who loved thee first and best, My name, perchance, may haunt the spot,

Not quite unprized—nor all forgot.

TO---

MINE is a wayward lay;
And, if its echoing rhymes I try to string,

Proveth a truant thing,
Whenso some names I love, send it
away!

For then, eyes swimming o'er, And claspëd hands, and smiles in fondness meant,

Are much more eloquent—
So it had fain begone, and speak no
more!

Yet shall it come again,
Ah, friend belov'd if so thy wishes be,
And, with mild melody,
I will, upon thine ear, cadence my
strain—

Cadence my simple line,
Unfashion'd by the cunning hand
of Art,
But coming from my heart

But coming from my heart,
To tell the message of its love to
thine!

As ocean shells, when taken From ocean's bed, will faithfully repeat

Her ancient music sweet— Ev'n so these words, true to my heart, shall waken!

Oh! while our bark is seen,
Our little bark of kindly, social love,
Down life's clear stream to move
Toward the summer shores, where all
is green—

So long thy name shall bring Echoes of joy unto the grateful gales, And thousand tender tales, To freshen the fond hearts that round

thee cling!

~~

Hast thou not looked upon
The flowerets of the field in lowly
dress?

Blame not my simpleness— Think only of my love!—my song is gone.

STANZAS

OCCASIONED BY A PASSAGE IN MR.
EMERSON'S JOURNAL, WHICH
STATES THAT, ON THE MENTION OF
LORD BYRON'S NAME, CAPTAIN
DEMETRIUS, AN OLD ROUMELIOT,
BURST INTO TEARS.

Name not his name, or look afar— For when my spirit hears That name, its strength is turned to

My voice is turned to tears.

Name me the host and battle-storm, Mine own good sword shall stem; Name me the foeman and the block, I have a smile for them!

But name him not, or cease to mark
This brow where passions sweep—
Behold, a warrior is a man,
And as a man may weep!

I could not scorn my Country's foes, Did not these tears descend— I could not love my Country's fame, And not my Country's Friend.

Deem not his memory e'er can be Upon our spirits dim—

Name us the generous and the free, And we must think of him! For his voice resounded through our land

Like the voice of liberty,

As when the war-trump of the wind Upstirs our dark blue sea.

His arm was in the foremost rank, Where embattled thousands roll— His name was in the love of Greece, And his spell was on her soul!

But the arm that wielded her good sword,

The brow that wore the wreath,
The lips that breathed the deathless
thought—

They went asleep in death.

Ye left his HEART, when ye took away

The dust in funeral state; And we dumbly placed in a little urn

That home of all things great.

The banner streamed—the war-shout

rose—
Our heroes played their part;
Butnota pulse would throb or burn—
Oh! could it be his heart!

I will not think—'tis worse than vain Upon such thoughts to keep; Then, Briton, name me not his

name—
I cannot choose but weep!

THE PAST

THERE is a silence upon the Ocean, Albeit it swells with a feverish motion;

Like to the battle-camp's fearful calm, While the banners are spread, and the warriors arm.

The winds beat not their drum to the waves,

But sullenly moan in the distant caves;

Talking over, before they rise, Some of their dark conspiracies.

And so it is in this life of ours, A calm may be on the present hours, But the calmest hour of festive glee May turn the mother of woe to thee.

I will betake me to the Past, And she shall make my love at last I will find my home in her tarryingplace—

I will gaze all day on her deathly face!

Her torm, though awful, is fair to view;

The clasp of her hand, though cold, is true;

Her shadowy brow hath no changefulness,

And her numbered smiles can grow no less!

Her voice is like a pleasant song, Which we have not heard for very long,

And which a joy on our souls will cast, Though we know not where we heard it last.

She shall walk with me, away, away, Where'er the mighty have left their clay;

She shall speak to me in places lone, With a low and holy tone.

Ay! when I have lit my lamp at night, She will be present with my sprite; And I will say, whate'er it be, Every word she telleth me!

THE PRAYER

Methought that I did stand upon a tomb—

And all was silent as the dust beneath,

While feverish thoughts upon my soul would come,

Losing my words in tears: I thought of death;
And prayed that when my lips gave

out the breath,
The friends I loved like life might

The friends I loved like life might stay behind; So, for a little while, my name

might eath
Be something dear,—spoken with

be something dear,—spoken with voices kind,
Heard with remembering looks, from

eyes which tears would blind!

I prayed that I might sink into my rest,

(O foolish, selfish prayer!) before them all;

So I might look my last on those loved best—

So never would my voice repining call,

And never would my tears impassioned fall

On one familiar face turning to clay!

So would my tune of life be musical, Albeit abrupt—like airs the Spaniards play,

Which in the sweetest part break off, and die away.

Methought I looked around! the scene was rife

With little vales, green banks, and waters heaving;

And every living thing did joy in life,

And every thing of beauty did seem living—

Oh then, life's pulse was at my heart reviving;

And then I knew that it was good to bear

Dispensed woe, that by the spirit's grieving

It might be weaned from a world so fair!—
Thus with submissive words mine

heart did close its prayer.

ON A PICTURE OF RIEGO'S WIDOW

PLACED IN THE EXHIBITION

DAUGHTER of Spain! a passer by May mark the cheek serenely pale—

The dark eyes which dream silently, And the calm lip which gives no wail!

Calm! it bears not a deeper trace Of feelings it disdained to show; We look upon the Widow's face,

And only read the Patriot's woe!

No word, no look, no sigh of thine, Would make his glory seem more dims:

Thou would'st not give to vulgar eyne
The sacred tear which fell for HIM.

Thou would'st not hold to the world's view
Thy ruined joys, thy broken heart—

The jeering world—it only knew
Of all thine anguish—that thou
werr!

While o'er his grave thy steps would go

With a firm tread,—stilling thy love,—

As if the dust would blush below
To feel one faltering foot above.

For Spain, he dared the noble strife— For Spain, he gave his latest breath;

And he who lived the Patriot's life, Was dragged to die the traitor's death!

And the shout of thousands swept around,

As he stood the traitor's block beside;

But his dying lips gave a free sound— Let the foe weep!—THY brow had pride!

Yet haply in the midnight air,
When none might part thy God
and thee,

The lengthened sob, the passionate prayer,

Have spoken thy soul's agony!

But silent else, thou past away—
The plaint unbreath'd, the anguish
hid—

More voiceless than the echoing clay Which idly knocked thy coffin's lid.

Peace be to thee! while Britons seek This place, if British souls they bear, Twill start the crimson in the cheek To see Riego's widow THERE!

SONG

WEEP, as if you thought of laughter! Smile, as tears were coming after! Marry your pleasures to your woes; And think life's green well worth its

No sorrow will your heart betide, Without a comfort by its side; The sun may sleep in his sea-bed, But you have starlight overhead.

Trust not to Joy! the rose of June, When opened wide, will wither soon;

İtalian days without twilight, Will turn them suddenly to night.

Joy, most changeful of all things, Flits away on rainbow wings; And when they look the gayest, know, It is that they are spread to go!

THE DREAM

A FRAGMENT

I нар a dream!—my spirit was unbound

From the dark iron of its dungeon, clay,

And rode the steeds of Time;—my thoughts had sound,
And spoke without a word.—I went

And spoke without a word,—I went away

Among the buried ages, and did lay The pulses of my heart beneath the touch

Of the rude minstrel Time, that he should play

Thereon, a melody which might seem such

As musing spirits love—mournful, but not too much!

I had a dream—and there mine eyes did see

The shadows of past deeds like present things—
The sepulchres of Greece and

Hespery,
Ægyptus, and old lands, gave up

their kings, Their prophets, saints, and min-

strels, whose lute-strings Keep a long echo—yea, the dead, white bones

Did stand up by the house whereto Death clings,

And dressed themselves in life, speaking of thrones,

And fame, and power, and beauty, in familiar tones!

I went back further still, for I beheld

What time the earth was one fair Paradise—

And over such bright meads the waters welled,

I wot the rainbow was content to rise

Upon the earth, when absent from the skies !

And there were tall trees that I never knew.

Whereon sate nameless birds in merry guise,

Folding their radiant wings, as the flowers do,

When summer nights send sleep down with the dew.

Anon there came a change-a terrible motion.

That made all living things grow pale and shake!

The dark Heavens bowed themselves unto the ocean.

Like a strong man in strife-Ocean did take

His flight across the mountains; and the lake

Was lashed into a sea where the winds ride-

Earth was no more, for in her merrymake

She had forgot ner God-Sin claimed his bride,

And with his vampire breath sucked out her life's fair tide!

Life went back to her nostrils, and she raised

Her spirit from the waters once again-

had gazed, Were not—though she was beautiful

as when

The Grecian called her "Beauty" -sinful men

Walked i' the track of the waters. and felt bold-Yea, they looked up to Heaven in

calm disdain, As if no eye had seen its vault un-

fold

Darkness, and fear, and death !--as if a tale were told!

And ages fled away within my dream:

And still Sin made the heart his dwelling-place,

Eclipsing Heaven from men; but it would seem

. face to face,

And speak of the soul's life, of hope. and grace-

Anon there rose such sounds as angels breathe—

For a God came to die, bringing down peace-

"Pan was not;" and the darkness that did wreathe

The earth, passed from the soul—Life came by death!

RIGA'S LAST SONG

I have looked my last on my native land.

And over these strings I throw my hand.

To say in the death-hour's minstrelsv.

Hellas, my country! farewell to thee!

I have looked my last on my native shore;

I shall tread my country's plains no more;

But my last thought is of her fame; But my last breath speaketh her name!

And though these lips shall soon be still.

They may now obey the spirit's will; Though the dust be fettered, the spirit is free-

Hellas, my country! farewell to thee!

I go to death—but I leave behind The lovely sights, on which I erst The stirrings of Freedom's mighty mind;

> Her voice shall arise from plain to sky, Her steps shall tread where my ashes

> I looked on the mountains of proud Souli.

And the mountains they seemed to look on me;

I spoke my thought on Marathon's plain,

And Marathon seemed to speak again!

And as I journeyed on my way, I saw an infant group at play;

One shouted aloud in his childish glee, And showed me the heights of Thermopylæ!

I gazed on peasants hurrying by,-That two or three dared commune | The dark Greek pride crouched in their eye;

So I swear in my death-hour's minstrelsy.

Hellas, my country! thou shalt be free!

No more!—I dash my lyre on the ground—

I tear its strings from their home of sound—

For the music of slaves shall never keep Where the hand of a freeman was wont to sweep!

And I bend my brows above the block. Silently waiting the swift death shock; For these lips shall speak what becomes the free—

Or—Hellas, my country! farewell to thee!

He bowed his head with a Patriot's pride,

And his dead trunk fell the mute lyre beside!

The soul of each had passed away—Soundless the strings—breathless the clay!

THE VISION OF FAME

DID ye ever sit on summer noon,
Half musing and half asleep,
When ye smile in such a dreamy way,
Ye know not if ye weep—

When the little flowers are thick beneath,

And the welkin blue above;
When there is not a sound but the cattle's low.

And the voice of the woodland dove?

A while ago, and I dreamed thus—
I mused on ancient story,—

For the heart like a minstrel of old

doth seem,
It delighteth to sing of glory.

What time I saw before me stand A bright and lofty One; A golden lute was in her hand,

And her brow drooped thereon. But the brow that drooped was raised soon,

Showing its royal sheen—
It was, I guessed, no human brow,
Though pleasant to human een.
And this brow of peerless majesty

With its whiteness did enshroud Two eyes that, darkly mystical, 'Gan look up at a cloud. Like to the hair of Berenice, Fetch'd from its house of light, Was the hair which wreathed her

shadowless form—
And Fame the ladve hight!

But as she wended on to me,

My heart's deep fear was chidden; For she called up the sprite of Melody, Which in her lute lay hidden.

When ye speak to well-beloved ones, Your voice is tender and low:

The wires methought did love her touch—

For they did answer so.

And her lips in such a quiet way
Gave the chant soft and long,—
You might have thought she only
breathed,

And that her breath was song :-

"When Death shrouds thy memory, Love is no shrine—

The dear eyes that weep for thee Soon sleep like thine!

The wail murmured over thee Fainteth away;

And the heart which kept love for thee Turns into clay!

"But would'st thouremembered be, Make me thy vow;

This verse that flows gushingly, Telleth thee how—

Linking thy hand in mine, Listen to me,

So not a thought of thine Dieth with thee—

"Rifle thy pulsing heart Of the gift, love made; Bid thine eye's light depart; Let thy cheek fade! Give me the slumber deep,

Which night-long seems; Give me the joys that creep Into thy dreams!

"Give me thy youthful years, Merriest that fly—So the words, spoke in tears.

Liveth for aye! So thy sepulchral stone, Nations may raise—

What time thy soul hath known The worth of praise!"

She did not sing this chant to me, Though I was sitting by; But I listened to it with chained

breath.

That had no power to sigh.

And ever as the chant went on, Its measure changed to wail; And ever as the lips sang on, Her face did grow more pale.

Paler and paler—till anon
A fear came o'er my soul;
For the Besh curled up from her bones,
Like to a blasted scroll!

Ay! silently it dropped away, Before my wondering sight— There was only a bleached skeleton, Where erst was ladye bright!

But still the vacant sockets gleamed
With supernatural fires—

But still the bony hands did ring Against the shuddering wires!

Alas, alas! I wended home,
With a sorrow and a shame—
Is Fame the rest of our poor hearts?
Woe's me! for THIS is FAME!

PROMETHEUS BOUND

TRANSLATED FROM THE GREEK OF ÆSCHYLUS
1833

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA

PROMETHEUS OCEANUS HEPHÆSTUS Io, daughter of Inachus

HERMES STRENGTH AND FORCE

Chorus of Ocean Nymphs

Scene.—Strength and Force, HermTherme and Property at the Rocks

ESTUS, and PROMETHEUS, at the Rocks.

Strength. We reach the utmost

limit of the earth, The Scythian track, the desert with-

out man,—
And now, Hephæstus, thou must

And now, Hephæstus, thou mus needs fulfil

The mandate of our father, and, with links

Indissoluble of adamantine chains, Fasten against this beetling precipice, This guilty god! Because he filched

Thine own bright flower, the glory of plastic fire,

And gifted mortals with it,—such a sin, It doth behove he expiate to the gods, Learning to accept the empery of Zeus.

And leave off his old trick of loving

Hephæstus. O Strength and Force,
—for you, our Zeus's will

Presents a deed for doing,—no more!
—but I,

I lack your daring, up this stormrent chasm,

To fix with violent hands a kindred god. Howbeit necessity compels me so

That I must dare it—and our Zeus commands

With a most inevitable word. Ho, thou!

High-thoughted son of Themis who is sage!

Thee loth, I loth must rivet fast in chains

Against this rocky height unclomb by man,

Where never human voice nor face shall find

Out thee who lov'st them, and thy beauty's flower,

Scorched in the sun's clear heat, shall fade away.

Night shall come up with garniture of stars To comfort thee with shadow, and

the sun

Disperse, with retrickt beams, the morning-frosts, But through all changes, sense of

present woe Shall vex thee sore, because with

Shall vex thee sore, because with none of them

There comes a hand to free. Such fruit is plucked

From love of man!—and in that thou, a god,

Didst brave the wrath of gods and give away

Unduerespect to mortals, for that crime Thou art adjudged to guard this joyless rock, Erect, unslumbering, bending not the knee,

And many a cry and unavailing moan To utter on the air! For Zeus is stern,

And new-made kings are cruel. Be it so. Strength.

Why loiter in vain pity? Why not hate A god the gods hate ?-one, too, who betrayed

Thy glory unto men?

An awful thing Hebhæstus. Is kinship joined to friendship.

Grant it be: Strength. Is disobedience to the Father's word A possible thing? Dost quail not more for that?

Hephæstus. Thou, at least, art a stern one! ever bold!

Strength. Why, if I wept, it were no remedy!

And do not thou spend labour on the air The sight o' the eyes to pity. To bootless uses.

Hephæstus. Cursed handicraft! I curse and hate thee, O my craft! Strength. Why hate

Thy craft, most plainly innocent of all These pending ills?

Hephæstus. I would some other hand

Were here to work it!

Strength. All work hath its pain, Except to rule the gods. There is none free

Except King Zeus.

Hebhæstus. I know it very well: I argue not against it.

Strength. Why not, then, Make haste, and lock the fetters over

Lest Zeus behold thee lagging. Here be chains-Hebhæstus.

Zeus may behold these.

Strength. Seize him, -strike amain! Strike with the hammer on each side his hands-

Rivet him to the rock.

Hebhæstus. The work is done. And thoroughly done.

Strength. Still faster grapple him. -Wedge him in deeper,-leave no inch to stir!

He's terrible for finding a way out From the irremediable.

Hephæstus. Here's an arm, at least, Grappled past freeing.

Strength. Now, then, buckle me

The other securely. Let this wise one learn

He's duller than our Zeus.

Oh, none but HE Hephæstus. Accuse me justly!

Strength. Now, straight through the chest, Take him and bite him with the

clenching tooth Of the adamantine wedge, and rivet

him. Hephæstus. Alas. Prometheus!

what thou sufferest here,

I sorrow over.

Strength. Dost thou flinch again, And breathe groans for the enemies of Zeus?

Beware, lest thine own pity find thee out.

Hebhæstus. Thou dost behold a spectacle that turns

I behold Strength. A sinner suffer his sin's penalty.

But lash the thongs about his sides. Hephæstus. So much

I must do. Urge no farther than I must. Strength. Ay, but I will urge !and, with shout on shout,

Will hound thee at this quarry! Get thee down And ring amain the iron round his

legs! Hephæstus. That work was not

long doing.

Strength. Heavily now Let fall the strokes upon the perforant gyves!

For He who rates the work has a heavy hand.

Thy speech is savage Hephæstus. as thy shape.

Strength. Be thou Gentle and tender! but revile not me For the firm will and the untruckling hate.

Hephæstus. Let us go! He is netted round with chains.

Strength. Here now, taunt on! and, having spoiled the gods

Of honours, crown withal thy mortal men

Who live a whole day out! Why, how could they

Draw off from thee one single of thy griefs?

Methinks the Dæmons gave thee a wrong name,

Prometheus, which means Providence,—because

Thou dost thyself need providence to see.

Thy roll and ruin from the top of doom.

Prometheus (alone). O holy Æther,
and swift-winged Winds,

And River-wells, and laughter innumerous

Of yon Sea-waves! Earth, mother of us all,

And all-viewing cyclic Sun, I cry on you!—

Behold me, a god, what I endure from gods!

Behold, with throe on throe, How, wasted by this woe,

I wrestle down the myriad years of __Time!

Behold, how, fast around me, The new King of the happy ones sublime

Has flung the chain he forged, has shamed and bound me!

Woe, woe! to-day's woe and the coming morrow's,

I cover with one groan! And where

I cover with one groan! And where is found me

A limit to these sorrows?

And yet what word do I say? I

have foreknown

Clearly all things that should benothing done,

Comes sudden to my soul—and I must bear

What is ordained with patience, being aware

Necessity doth front the universe With an invincible gesture. Yet this curse

Which strikes me now, I find it hard to brave

In silence or in speech. Because I gave Honour to mortals, I have yoked my soul

To this compelling fate! Because I stole

The secret fount of fire, whose bubbles went

Over the ferule's brim, and manward sent

Art's mighty means and perfect rudiment,

That sin I expiate in this agony,

Hung here in fetters, 'neath the blanching sky!

Ah, ah me! what a sound, What a fragrance sweeps up from a pinion unseen

Of a god, or a mortal, or nature between,—

Sweeping up to this rock where the earth has her bound.

To have sight of my pangs,—or some guerdon obtain—

Lo! a god in the anguish, a god in the chain!

The god, Zeus hateth sore, And his gods hate again,

As many as trod on his glorified floor,—

Because I loved mortals too much evermore!

Alas me! what a murmur and motion I hear,

As of birds flying near!
And the air undersings
The light stroke of their wings—
all life that approaches. I wait

And all life that approaches, I wait for in fear.

Chorus of Sea Nymphs, 1st Strophe.

Fear nothing! our troop
Floats lovingly up,
With a quick-oaring stroke

Of wings steered to the rock, Having softened the soul of our father below!

For the gales of swift-bearing have sent me a sound,—

And the clank of the iron, the malleted blow,

Smote down the profound Of my caverns of old, And struck the red light in a blush

from my brow,—
Till I sprang up unsandalled, in

haste to behold, And rushed forth on my chariot of wings manifold.

Prometheus. Alas me!—alas me! Ye offspring of Tethys, who bore at her breast

Many children, and eke of Oceanus,
—he,

Coiling still around earth with perpetual unrest!

Behold me and see How transfixed with the fang Of a fetter, I hang On the high-jutting rocks of this fissure, and keep
An uncoveted watch o'er the world

and the deep.

Chorus, 1st Antistrophe.

I behold thee, Prometheus—yet now, yet now,

A terrible cloud, whose rain is tears, Sweeps over mine eyes that witness how

Thy body appears

Hung awaste on the rocks by infrangible chains!

For new is the hand and the rudder that steers

The ship of Olympus through surge and wind—

And of old things passed, no track is behind.

Prometheus. Under earth, under Hades

Where the home of the shade is, All into the deep, deep Tartarus, I would he had hurled me adown!

I would he had plunged me, fastened thus

In the knotted chain, with the savage clang,

All into the dark, where there should be none,

Neither god nor another, to laugh and see!

But now the winds sing through Thou art, sooth, a brave god, and shake And, for all thou hast bor

The hurtling chains wherein I hang,—

And I, in my naked sorrows, make Much mirth for my enemy.

Chorus, 2nd Strophe.

Nay! who of the gods hath a heart so stern.

As to use thy woe for a mock and mirth?

Who would not turn more mild to learn

Thy sorrows? who of the heaven and earth

Save Zeus? But he Right wrathfully

Bears on his sceptral soul unbent,

And rules thereby the heavenly seed,

Nor will he cease, till he content His thirsty heart in a finished deed:

Or till Another shall appear,
To win by fraud, to seize by fear
The hard to be captured government.

Prometheus. Yet even of me he shall have need,

That monarch of the blessed seed;

Of me, of me, who now am cursed

Beneath his fetters dire,—
To wring my secret out withal,
And learn by whom his sceptre
shall

Be filched from him—as was, at first,

His heavenly fire!
But he never shall enchant me
With his honey-lipped per-

With his honey-lipped persuasion, Never, never shall he daunt me

With the oath and threat of passion,

Into speaking as they want me, Till he loose this savage chain, And accept the expiation Of my sorrow, by his pain.

Chorus, 2nd Antistrophe.

Thou art, sooth, a brave god,
And, for all thou hast borne
From the stroke of the rod,
Nought relaxest from scorn!
But thou speakest unto me

Too free and unworn—
And a terror strikes through me,
And festers my soul,
And I fear, in the roll

Of the storm, for thy fate
In the ship far from shore—
Since the son of Saturnius is hard in

his hate,

And unmoved in his heart ever-

And unmoved in his heart evermore.

Prometheus. I know that Zeus is stern!

I know he metes his justice by his will!

And yet, his soul shall learn More softness when once broken by this ill, And, curbing his unconquerable vaunt,

He shall rush on in fear, to meet with

Who rush to meet with him in agony, To issues of harmonious covenant. Chorus. Remove the veil from all things and relate

The story to us!—of what crime accused,

Zeus smites thee with dishonourable pangs.

Speak! if to teach us do not grieve thyself.

Prometheus. The utterance o these things is torture to me,

But so, too, is their silence! each way lies

Woe strong as fate !-

When gods began with wrath,

And war rose up between their starry brows,—

Some choosing to cast Chronos from his throne

That Zeus might king it there, and some in haste

With opposite oaths that they would have no Zeus

To rule the gods for ever,—I, who brought

The counsel I thought meetest, could not move

The Titans, children of the Heaven and Earth,—
What time disdaining in their rugged

What time, disdaining in their rugged souls

My subtlemachinations, they assumed

It was an easy thing for force to take The mastery of fate. My mother, then,

Who is called not only Themis but Earth too

(Her single beauty joys in many names),

Did teach me with reiterant prophecy What future should be,—and how conquering gods

Should not prevail by strength and violence,

But by guile only. When I told them so.

They would not deign to contemplate the truth

On all sides round,—whereat I deemed it best.

To lead my willing mother upwardly, And set my Themis face to face with Zeus,

As willing to receive her! Tartarus, With its abysmal cloister of the Dark, Because I gave that counsel, covers up The antique Chronos and his siding hosts:

And, by that counsel helped, the king of gods

Hath recompensed me by these bitter pangs!

For kingship wears a cancer at the
heart,—

Distrust in friendship. Do ye also ask

What crime it is for which he tortures me—

It shall be clear before you. When at first

He filled his father's throne, he instantly

Made various gifts of glory to the gods, And dealt the empire out. Alone of men,

Of miserable men, he took no count, But yearned to sweep their track off from the world,

And plant a newer race there! Not a god

Resisted that desire except myself!

I dared it! I drew mortals back to light,

From meditated ruin deep as hell!—
For which wrong, I am bent down in
these pangs,

Dreadful to suffer, mournful to behold,—

And I, who pitied man, am thought myself

Unworthy of pity,—while I render out Deep rhythms of anguish 'neath the harping hand

That strikes me thus !—a sight to shame your Zeus!

Chorus. Hard as thy chains, and cold as all these rocks,

Is he, Prometheus, who withholds his heart

From joining in thy woe. I yearned before

To fly this sight—and, now I gaze on it.

I sicken inwards.

Prometheus. To my friends, indeed,

I must be a sad sight.

Chorus. And didst thou sin No more than so?

Prometheus. I did restrain besides

My mortals from premeditating death.

Chorus. How didst thou medicine the plague-fear of death?

Prometheus. I set blind Hopes to inhabit in their house.

Chorus. By that gift, thou didst help thy mortals well.

Prometheus. I gave them also,—fire.

Chorus. And have they now, Those creatures of a day, the redeyed fire?

Prometheus. They have! and shall learn by it, many arts.

Chorus. And, truly, for such sins Zeus tortures thee,

And will remit no anguish? Is there set

No limit before thee to thine agony?

Prometheus. No other! only what seems good to HIM.

Chorus. And how will it seem good? what hope remains?

Seest thou not that thou hast sinned?

But that thou hast sinned
It glads me not to speak of, and

grieves thee—
Then let it pass from both! and
seek thyself

Some outlet from despair.

Prometheus. It is in truth
An easy thing to stand aloof from
pain

And lavish exhortation and advice On one vexed sorely by it. I have known

All in prevision I—By my choice, my choice,

I freely sinned—I will confess my

And helping mortals, found mine own despair!—

I did not think indeed that I should pine

Beneath such pangs against such skyey rocks,—

skyey rocks,— Doomed to this drear hill and no neighbouring

Of any life l—but mourn not ye for griefs

I bear to-day!—hear rather, dropping down

To the plain, how other woes creep on to me,

And learn the consummation of my doom.

Beseech you, nymphs, beseech you!

Beseech you, nymphs, beseech you
—grieve for me

Who am now grieving!—for Griefs walks the earth,
And sits down at the foot of each by turns.

Chorus. We hear the deep clash of thy words,

Prometheus, and obey!
And I spring with a rapid foot away

From the rushing car and the holy air

The track of birds—
And I drop to the rugged ground and there
'Await the tale of thy despair.

Enter Oceanus.

Oceanus. I reach the bourne of my weary road

Where I may see and answer thee.

Prometheus, in thine agony!
On the back of the quick-winged bird I glode,

And I bridled him in
With the will of a god!
Behold, thy sorrow aches in me,
Constrained by the force of

kin,—
Nay, though that tie were all undone,

For the life of none beneath the sun,

Would I seek a larger benison
Than I seek for thine!—
And thou shalt learn my words

are truth,—
That no fair parlance of the

mouth
Grows falsely out of mine.
Now give me a deed to prove my

now give me a deed to prove my faith,—

For no faster friend is named in

For no faster friend is named in breath

Than I, Oceanus, am thine.

Prometheus. Ha! what has brought
thee? Hast thou also come

thou dared 'o leave the depths called after

thee, the caves

elf-hewn and self-roofed with spontaneous rock.

o visit earth, the mother of my

chain? Tast come indeed to view my doom and mourn

that I should sorrow thus? Gaze on, and see

How I, the fast friend of your Zeus, -how I.

The erector of the empire in his hand,-

Am bent beneath that hand, in this despair!

Oceanus. Prometheus, I behold,and I would fain Exhort thee, though already subtle

enough, To a better wisdom. Titan, know

thyself. And take new softness to thy manners And thou, beware of sorrow on this

A new king rules the gods. If words like these,

Harsh (words and trenchant, thou wilt fling abroad,

Zeus haply, though he sit so far and high,

May hear thee do it, and, so, this wrath of his,

Which now affects thee fiercely, shall appear A mere child's sport at vengeance!

Wretched god, Rather dismiss the passion which

thou hast, And seek a change from grief. Per-

haps I seem To address thee with old saws and outworn sense.-

Yet such a curse, Prometheus, surely

On lips that speak too proudly! thou, meantime,

Art none the meeker, nor dost vield a jot

To evil circumstance, — preparing

To swell the account of grief with other griefs

Than what are borne! Beseech thee. use me then

'o look upon my woe? How hast | For counsel! Do not spurn against the pricks,---

Seeing that who reigns, reigns by cruelty,

Instead of right. And now, I go from hence.

And will endeavour if a power of mine

Can break thy fetters through. For thee,—be calm.

And smooth thy words from passion. Knowest thou not

Of perfect knowledge, thou who knowest too much.

That where the tongue wags, ruin never lags?

Prometheus. I gratulate thee, who hast shared and dared

All things with me, except their penalty!

Enough so ! leave these thoughts ! It cannot be

That thou shouldst move HIM. HE may not be moved!

road!

Oceanus. Ay! ever wiser for another's use Than thine! the event, and not the

prophecy. Attests it to me. Yet where now I

rush. Thy wisdom hath no power to drag

me back: Because I glory—glory, to go hence To win for thee deliverance from thy

pangs, As a free gift from Zeus.

Why there, again, Prometheus. I give thee gratulation and applause! Thou lackest no good will. But, as for deeds,

Do nought! 'twere all done vainly! helping nought,

Whatever thou wouldst do. Rather take rest,

And keep thyself from evil. If I grieve,

I do not therefore wish to multiply The griefs of others. Verily, not so! For still my brother's doom doth vex my soul,-

My brother Atlas, standing in the west,

Shouldering the column of the heaven and earth,

A difficult burden! I have also

And pitied as I saw, the earth-born That words do medicine anger?

The habitant of old Cilician caves.

The great war-monster of the hundred heads. (All taken and bowed beneath the

violent Hand). Typhon the fierce, who did resist the

And, hissing slaughter from his dread-

ful jaws,

Did flash ferocious glory from his eves. As if to storm the throne of Zeus!

Whereat.

straight at him.-

The headlong bolt of thunder breath- Should seem not wise at all. ing flame,

And struck him downward from his My very crime, eminence

Of exultation! Through the very

It struck him, and his strength was withered up

To ashes, thunder-blasted. Now,

A helpless trunk supinely, at full length,

Beside the strait of ocean, spurred

By roots of Ætna,—high upon whose Hephaistus sits and strikes the flash-

ing ore! From thence the rivers of fire shall

burst away Hereafter, and devour with savage Lo! my four-footed Bird sweeps jaws

The equal plains of fruitful Sicily. -Such passion he shall boil back in hot darts

Of an insatiate fury and sough of flame.-

Fallen Typhon,-howsoever struck and charred

By Zeus's bolted thunder! But for

Thou art not so unlearned as to need My teaching-let thy knowledge save thyself.

I quaff the full cup of a present doom, And wait till Zeus hath quenched his will in wrath.

Oceanus. Prometheus, art thou ignorant of this .-

Prometheus.

If the word With seasonable softness touch the soul.

And, where the parts are ulcerous, sear them not

With any rudeness.

Oceanus. With a noble aim To dare as nobly—is there harm in that >

Dost thou discern it? Teach me. Prometheus. I discern

Vain aspiration,—unresultive work. Oceanus. Then suffer me to bear the brunt of this!

The sleepless arrow of Zeus flew Since it is profitable that one who is wise

Prometheus. And such would seem

Oceanus. In truth, thine argument Sends me back home.

Prometheus. Lest any lament for

Should cast thee down to hate. Oceanus. The hate of Him,

Who sits a new king on the absolute throne? Prometheus. Beware of him,-

lest thine heart grieve by him. Oceanus. Thy doom, Prometheus, be my teacher! Prometheus,

Go! Depart—beware !--and keep the mind thou hast.

Oceanus. Thy words drive after, as I rush before-

smooth and wide

The flats of air with balanced pinions glad

To bend his knee at home, in the ocean-stall.

TExit OCEANUS.

1st Strophe.

I moan thy fate, I moan for thee, Prometheus! From my eyes too tender.

Drop after drop incessantly.

The tears of my heart's pity render My cheeks wet from their fountains free,-

Because that Zeus, the stern and cold,

Whose law is taken from his breast.

Uplifts his sceptre manifest Over the gods of old.

1st Antistrophe.

All the land is moaning With a murmured plaint to-day! All the mortal nations, Having habitations In the holy Asia,

Are a dirge intoning For thine honour and thy brother's. Once majestic beyond others

In the old belief.-Now are groaning in the groaning Of thy deep-voiced grief.

and Strophe.

Mourn the maids inhabitant Of the Colchian land.

Who with white, calm bosoms, stand In the battle's roar!

Mourn the Scythian tribes that haunt The verge of earth, Mæotis' shore.

2nd Antistrophe.

And Arabia's battle crown, And dwellers in the beetling town Mount Caucasus sublimely nears,-An iron squadron, thundering down With the sharp-prowed spears.

> But one other before, have I seen to remain.

By invincible pain Bound and vanquished,—one Titan! —'twas Atlas, who bears

In a curse from the gods, by that strength of his own

Which he evermore wears, The weight of the heaven on his shoulder alone,

While he sighs up the stars! And the tides of ocean wail, bursting their bars.-

Murmurs stir the profound,-And black Hades roars up through the chasm of the ground,-

And the fountains of pure-running rivers moan low

In a pathos of woe.

Prometheus. Beseech you, think not I am silent thus Through pride or scorn! I only gnaw my heart

With meditation, seeing myself so wronged!

For so—their honours to these newmade gods,

What other gave but I,—and dealt them out

With distribution? Ay-but here I am dumb!

For here, I should repeat your knowledge to you,

If I spake aught. List rather to the deeds

I did for mortals!—how, being fools before.

I made them wise and true in aim of

And let me tell you—not as taunting

But teaching you the intention of my gifts.

How, first beholding, they beheld in vain.

And hearing, heard not, but, like shapes in dreams,

Mixed all things wildly down the tedious time,

Nor knew to build a house against the sun,

With wicketed sides, nor any woodcraft knew. But lived, like silly ants, beneath

the ground In hollow caves unsunned. There, came to them

No steadfast sign of winter, nor of spring

Flower-perfumed, nor of summer full of fruit,-

But blindly and lawlessly they did all things

Until I taught them how the stars do

And set in mystery,—and devised for them

Number, the inducer of philosophies, The synthesis of Letters, and, beside, The artificer of all things, Memory, That sweet Muse-mother. I was

first to yoke The servile beasts in couples, carrying

An heirdom of man's burdens on their backs!

I joined to chariots, steeds, that love the bit

They champ at—the chief pomp of golden ease!

And none but I, originated ships, The seaman's chariots, wandering on the brine

linen wings! And I-oh, With miserable !-

Who did devise for mortals all these

Have no device left now to save myself

From the woe I suffer!

Most unseemly woe Chorus. Thou sufferest, and dost stagger from the sense.

Bewildered! Like a bad leech falling sick

Thou art faint at soul, and canst not find the drugs

Required to save thyself.

Prometheus. Harken the rest. And marvel further-what more arts and means

I did invent, this, greatest !—if a

Fell sick, there was no cure, nor escu-

Nor chrism, nor liquid, but for lack of drugs

Men pined and wasted, till I showed to them

Those mixtures of emollient remedies Whereby they might be rescued from disease.

I fixed the various rules of mantic art, Discerned the vision from the common dream,-

Instructed them in vocal auguries plain

The wayside omens, -flights of crookclawed birds,-

Showed which are, by their nature, fortunate.

And which not so, and what the food of each. And what the hates, affections, social

Of all to one another,—taught what

Of visceral lightness, coloured to a shade.

May charm the genial gods, and what I 'scape this chain's dishonour, and

fair spots Commend the lung and liver. Burn-

ing so The limbs encased in fat, and the long chine.

I led my mortals on to an art abstruse, And cleared their eyes to the image in the fire,

Erst filmed in dark. Enough said now of this.

For the other helps of man hid underground.

The iron and the brass, silver and gold, Can any dare affirm he found them out

Before me? None, I know! Unless he choose

To lie in his vaunt. In one word learn the whole.

That all arts came to mortals from Prometheus. Chorus. Give mortals now no in-

expedient help, Neglecting thine own sorrow! I have

hope still To see thee, breaking from the fetter

here. Stand up as strong as Zeus.

This ends not thus, Prometheus. The oracular Fate ordains. I must be bowed

By infinite woes and pangs, to escape this chain.

Necessity is stronger than mine art. Chorus. Who holds the helm of that Necessity?

Prometheus. The threefold Fates and the unforgetting Furies.

Chorus. Is Zeus less absolute than these are?

Prometheus. Yea. Hard to interpret, and defined as And therefore cannot fly what is ordained.

> Chorus. What is ordained for Zeus, except to be

A king for ever?

Prometheus. 'Tis too early yet For thee to learn it: ask no more. Chorus. Perhaps Thy secret may be something holy? Prometheus.

To another matter! this, it is not time To speak abroad, but utterly to veil In silence. For by that same secret kept,

its woe.

Chorus, 1st Strophe.

Never, oh never, May Zeus, the all-giver. Wrestle down from his throne, In that might of his own, To antagonise mine! Nor let me delay As I bend on my way Toward the gods of the shrine, Where the altar is full Of the blood of the bull, Near the tossing brine Of Ocean my father!

May no sin be sped in the word that is said,

But my vow, be it rather Consummated.

Nor evermore fail, nor evermore pine.

1st Antistrophe.

'Tis sweet to have
Life lengthened out
With hopes proved brave
By the very doubt,
Till the spirit enfold

ill the spirit enfold

Those manifest joys which were
foretold!

But I thrill to behold Thee, victim doomed, By the countless cares And the drear despairs, For ever consumed,—

And all because thou, who art fearless now.

Of Zeus above,

Dost overflow for mankind below With a free-souled, reverent love.

Ah! friend, behold and see!

What's all the beauty of humanity?
Can it be fair?

What's all the strength?—is it strong?

And what hope can they bear,

These dwing livers—living one day.

These dying livers—living one day long?

Ah, seest thou not, my friend, How feeble and slow

And like a dream, doth go
This poor blind manhood, drifted
from its end?

And how no mortal wranglings can confuse

The harmony of Zeus?

Prometheus, I have learnt these things,

From the sorrow in thy face!
Another song did drop its wings

Upon my lips in other days

When round the bath and round the bed

The hymeneal chant instead
I sang for thee, and smiled,—
And thou didst lead, with gifts

and vows, Hesione, my father's child,

Hesione, my father's child, To be thy wedded spouse.

Io enters.

Io. What land is this? what people is here?

And who is he that writhes, I see, In the rock-hung chain?

Now, what is the crime that hath brought thee to pain?

And what is the land—make answer free—

Which I wander through, in my wrong and fear?—

Ah! ah! ah me! The gad-fly stingeth to agony! O Earth, keep off that phantasm pale Of earth-born Argus!—ah!—I quail

When my soul descries That herdsman with the myriad eyes Which seem, as he comes, one crafty

eye! Graves hide him not, though he should die,—

But he doggeth me in my misery
From the roots of death, on high—on
high—

And along the sands of the siding deep,

All famine-worn, he follows me,

And his waxen reed doth undersound The waters round,

And giveth a measure that giveth sleep.

Woe, woe, woe!

Where shall my weary course be

What wouldst thou with me, Saturn's son?

And in what have I sinned, that I should go

Thus yoked to grief by thine hand for ever?

Ah! ah! dost vex me so, That I madden and shiver, Stung through with dread? Flash the fire down, to burn

Flash the fire down, to burn me!

Heave the earth up, to cover me!

Or plunge me in the deep, with the salt waves over me,

That the sea-beasts may be fed! O king, do not spurn me In my prayer!

everlonger, For this wandering, evermore.

Hath overworn me,-And I know not on what shore I may rest from my despair.

Chorus. Hearest thou what the ox-horned maiden saith?

Prometheus. How could I choose but harken what she saith.

The frenzied maiden?-Inachus's child ?-

Who love-warms Zeus's heart, and now is lashed

By Here's hate along the unending

Io. Who taught thee to articulate that name,-

> My father's? Speak to his child.

By grief and shame defiled! Who art thou, victim, thou-who dost acclaim

Mine anguish in true words, on the wide air?

And callest too by name the curse that came

From Heré unaware, To waste and pierce me with its maddening goad.

Ah—ah—I leap With the pang of the hungry-I

bound on the road-I am driven by my doom-

I am overcome By the wrath of an enemy strong and

deep! Are any of those who have tasted pain,

Alas!—wretched as I? Now tell me plain, doth aught re-

For my soul to endure beneath the sky?

Is there any help to be holpen by? If knowledge be in thee, let it be

Cry aloud-cry To the wandering, woeful maid. Prometheus. Whatever thou wouldst | Her own voice telling her own wastlearn, I will declare,-

No riddle upon my lips, but such straight words

As friends should use to each other when they talk.

Thou seest Prometheus, who gave mortals fire!

Io. O common Help of all men, known of all.

O miserable Prometheus,-for what

Dost thou endure thus?

Prometheus. I have done with wail For my own griefs—but lately.

Wilt thou not Io. Vouchsafe the boon to me?

Prometheus. Say what thou wilt, For I vouchsafe all.

Speak, then, and reveal Io. Who shut thee in this chasm.

Prometheus. The will of Zeus. The hand of his Hephæstus.

And what crime. Dost expiate so? Prometheus. Enough for thee I

have told.

In so much only.

Nay-but show besides The limit of my wandering, and the

Which yet is lacking to fulfil my grief.

Prometheus. Why, not to know were better than to know,

For such as thou.

Io. Beseech thee, blind me not To that which I must suffer.

If I do. Prometheus. The reason is not that I grudge a boon.

What reason, then, prevents thy speaking out?

Prometheus. No grudging! but a fear to break thine heart.

Io. Less care for me, I pray thee! Certainty.

I count for advantage.

Prometheus. Thou wilt have it so, And, therefore, I must speak. Now hear-

Chorus. Not yet! Give half the guerdon my way. Let us learn

First, what the curse is that befel the maid.-

ing woes!-

The sequence of that anguish shall await

The teaching of thy lips.

Prometheus. It doth behove That thou, maid Io, should vouchsafe to these

The grace they pray,—the more, because they are called

Thy father's sisters! since to open out And mourn out grief where it is possible

To draw a tear from the audience, is a work

That pays its own price well.

Io. I cannot choose

But trust you, nymphs, and tell you all ye ask,

In clear words—though I sob amid my speech

In speaking of the storm-curse sent from Zeus,

And of my beauty, from which height it took

Its swoop on me, poor wretch! left thus deformed,

And monstrous to your eyes. For evermore Around my virgin-chamber, wander-

Around my virgin-chamber, wandering went

The nightly visions which entreated me

With syllabled smooth sweetness.—
"Blessed maid,
Why lengthen out thy maiden hours,

when fate Permits the noblest spousal in the

world?
When Zeus burns with the arrow of

thy love,
And fain would touch thy beauty?—

Maiden, thou
Despise not Zeus! depart to Lerne's

mead, That's green around thy father's

flocks and stalls, Until the passion of the heavenly Eye Be quenched in sight." Such dreams

did all night long
Constrain me—me, unhappy!—till I
dared

To tell my father how they trod the

With visionary steps; whereat he sent His frequent heralds to the Pythian fane.

And also to Dodona, and inquired

How best, by act or speech, to please the gods.

The same returning, brought back oracles

Of doubtful sense, indefinite response, Dark to interpret. Then, at last there came

To Inachus an answer that was clear,—

Thrown straight as any bolt, and spoken out—

This—"He should drive me from my home and land,

And bid me wander to the extreme verge

Of all the earth—or, if he willed it not, Should have a thunder with a fiery eye,

Leap straight from Zeus to burn up all his race,

To the last root of it." By which Loxian word,

Subdued, he drove me forth, and shut me out,

He loth, me loth,—but Zeus's violent
bit

Compelled him to the deed!—When instantly
My body and soul were changed and

distraught, And, hornèd as ye see, and spurred

along
By the fanged insect, with a maniac

I rushed on to Cenchrea's limpid stream,

And Lerne's fountain-water. There,
the earth-born,

The herdsman Argus, most immitigable

Of wrath, did find me out, and track me out With countless eyes, set staring at my

steps!—
And though an unexpected sudden

doom
Drew him from life—I—curse-

tormented still,

Am driven from land to land before
the scourge

The gods hold o'er me. So, thou hast heard the past,

And if a bitter future thou canst tell,

Speak on! I charge thee, do not flatter me

Through pity, with false words! for, in my mind,
Deceiving works more shame than

torturing doth.

Chorus.

Ah! silence here! Nevermore, nevermore, Would I languish for The stranger's word To thrill in mine ear!—

Nevermore for the wrong and the woe and the fear

So hard to behold, And so hard to bear,

Piercing my soul with a doubleedged sword

Of a sliding cold!
Ah Fate!—ah me!—
I shudder to see

This wandering maid in her agony.

Prometheus. Grief is too quick in thee, and fear too full!

Be patient till thou hast learned the rest!

Chorus. Speak—teach!— To those who are sad already, it seems sweet.

By clear foreknowledge to make perfect, pain.

Prometheus. The boon ye asked me first was lightly won,—

For first ye asked the story of this maid's grief As her own lips might tell it—Now

remains
To list what other sorrows she so

young
Must bear from Heré!—Inachus's

child,
O thou!—drop down thy soul, my

weighty words,
And measure out the landmarks
which are set

To end thy wandering! Toward the orient sun

First turn thy face from mine, and journey on

Along the desert flats, till thou shalt come

Where Scythia's shepherd peoples dwell aloft,

Perched in wheeled waggons under woven roofs,

And twang the rapid arrow past the bow—

Approach them not; but siding in thy course,

The rugged shore-rocks resonant to the sea,

Depart that country. On the left hand dwell

The iron-workers, called the Chalybes, Of whom beware! for certes they are uncouth,

And nowise bland to strangers.

Reaching so

The stream Hybristes (well the scorner called),

Attempt no passage,—it is hard to pass,—

Or ere thou come to Caucasus itself, That highest of mountains,—where the river leaps

The precipice in his strength !—thou must toil up

Those mountain-tops that neighbour with the stars,

And tread the south way, and draw near, at last,

The Amazonian host that hateth man,

Inhabitants of Themiscyra, close Upon Thermodon, where the sea's rough jaw

Doth gnash at Salmydessa and provide

A cruel host to seamen, and to ships A stepdame! They with unreluctant hand

Shall lead thee on and on, till thou arrive

Just where the ocean-gates show narrowest

On the Cimmerian isthmus. Leaving which,

Behoves thee swim with fortitude of soul

The strait Mæotis. Ay! and evermore

That traverse shall be famous on men's lips,

That strait called Bosphorus, the horned one's road,

So named because of thee !—who so wilt pass

From Europe's plain to Asia's continent.

How think ye, nymphs? the king of gods appears

Impartial in ferocious deeds? Behold!

The god desirous of this mortal's love Hath cursed her with these wanderings. Ah, fair child,

Thou hast met a bitter groom for bridal troth!

For all thou yet hast heard, can only

The incompleted prelude of thy doom. Io. Ah, ah!

Prometheus. Is't thy turn, now, to shrick and moan?

How wilt thou, when thou hast harkened what remains?

Chorus. Besides the grief thou hast told, can aught remain? Prometheus. A sea—of foredoomed evil worked to storm.

Io. What boots my life, then? why not cast myself

Down headlong from this miserable That, dashed against the flats, I may

redeem

My soul from sorrow? Better once to die,

Than day by day to suffer. Prometheus. Verily, It would be hard for thee to bear my

For whom it is appointed not to die. Death frees from woe: but I before me see

In all my far prevision, not a bound To all I suffer, ere that Zeus shall

From being a king.

And can it ever be Io. That Zeus shall fall from empire? Prometheus. Thou, methinks, Wouldst take some joy to see it. Could I choose?

I, who endure such pangs, now, by that God!

Learn from me, Prometheus. therefore, that the event shall be. Io. By whom shall his imperial sceptred hand

Be emptied so?

٠. م

Prometheus. Himself shall spoil himself,

Through his idiotic counsels.

How? declare; Unless the word bring evil. Prometheus.

He shall wed—

And in the marriage-bond be joined to grief.

Io. A heavenly bride—or human? Speak it out,

If it be utterable.

Prometheus. Why should I say which?

It ought not to be uttered, verily.

It is his wife shall tear him from his throne? Prometheus. It is his wife shall

bear a son to him,

More mighty than the father. From this doom Io.

Hath he no refuge? Prometheus. None—or ere that I

Loosed from these fetters-Yea-but who shall loose,

While Zeus is adverse? Prometheus. One who is born of thee,-

It is ordained so.

Io. What is this thou sayest? A son of mine shall liberate thee from woe?

Prometheus. After ten generations. count three more,

And find him in the third. The oracle

Remains obscure. Prometheus. And search it not, to

learn Thine own griefs from it.

Point me not to a good, To leave me straight bereaved.

Prometheus. I am prepared To grant thee one of two things. But which two?

Set them before me—grant me power to choose.

Prometheus. I grant it—choose now-shall I name aloud

What griefs remain to wound thee, or what hand

Shall save me out of mine? Vouchsafe, O god, Chorus.

The one grace of the twain to her who prays,

The next to me—and turn back neither prayer

Dishonoured by denial. To herself Recount the future wandering of her feet-

Then point me to the looser of thy chainBecause I yearn to know him. Prometheus. Since ye will, Of absolute will, this knowledge, I will set

No contrary against it, nor keep back A word of all ye ask for. Io, first

To thee I must relate thy wandering course

Far winding. As I tell it, write it

In thy soul's book of memories. When thou hast past

The refluent bound that parts two continents,

Track on the footsteps of the orient

In his own fire-across the roar of seas.

Fly till thou hast reached the Gorgonæan flats

Beside Cisthene. There the Phorcides, Three ancient maidens, live, with shape of swan,

One tooth between them, and one common eye,

On whom the sun doth never look at

With all his rays, nor evermore the moon,

When she looks through the night! Anear to whom

Are the Gorgon sisters three, en-

clothed with wings, With twisted snakes for ringlets,—

man-abhorred-There is no mortal gazes in their face,

And gazing can breathe on. I speak of such

To guard thee from their horror. Av! and list

Another tale of a dreadful sight!

The Griffins, those unbarking dogs of

Those sharp-mouthed dogs !- and the Arimaspian host

one-eyed horsemen, habiting beside

The river of Pluto that runs bright with gold.

Approach them not, beseech thee. Presently

Thou'lt come to a distant land, a Thou didst rush further onward,dusky tribe

Of dwellers at the fountain of the Sun, Whence flows the river Æthiops! wind along

Its banks and turn off at the cataracts, Just as the Nile pours, from the Bybline hills,

His holy and sweet wave !-his course shall guide

Thine own to that triangular Nileground,

Where, Io, is ordained for thee and thine

A lengthened exile. Have I said, in this Aught darkly or incompletely? now repeat

The question, make the knowledge fuller! Lo.

I have more leisure than I covet, here. Chorus. If thou canst tell us aught that's left untold

Or loosely told of her most dreary

Declare it straight! but if thou hast uttered all.

Grant us that latter grace for which we prayed.

Remembering how we prayed it. Prometheus. She has heard,

The uttermost of her wandering. There it ends.

But that she may be certain not to have heard

All vainly, I will speak what she en-

Ere coming hither, and invoke the past To prove my prescience true. so-to leave

A multitude of words, and pass at once

To the subject of thy course!—When thou hadst gone

To those Molossian plains which sweep around

Dodona shouldering Heaven, whereat the fane

Of Zeus Thesprotian keepeth oracle, And, wonder past belief, where oaks

do wave Articulate adjurations—ay, the same

Saluted thee in no perplexed phrase, But clear with glory, noble wife of Zeus

Who shouldst be (there, some sweetness took thy sense!)

stung along

mighty bay,-

And, tost back from it, wert tost to it again

In stormy evolution !-- and, know

In coming time that hollow of the sea Shall bear the name Ionian, and present

A monument of Io's passage through, Unto all mortals. Be these words the signs

Of my soul's power to look beyond the veil

Of visible things. The rest, to you and her,

I will declare in common audience, nymphs,

Returning thither where my speech brake off.

There is a town Canopus, built upon The earth's far margin, at the mouth of Nile.

And on the mound washed up by it !-Io, there

Shall Zeus give back to thee thy perfect mind,

And only by the pressure and the touch Of a hand not terrible! and thou to Zeus

Shalt bear a dusky son, who shall be

Thence, Epaphus, Touched! That son shall pluck the fruit

Of all that land wide-watered by the flow

Of Nile!-but after him, when counting out

As far as the fifth full generation,—

Full fifty maidens, a fair woman-race, Shall back to Argos turn reluctantly, To fly the proffered nuptials of their kin.

Their father's brother's. These being passion-struck,

Like falcons bearing hard on flying

Shall follow, hunting at a quarry of love

They should not hunt—till envious Heaven maintain

A curse betwixt that beauty and their

And Greece receive them, to be overcome

The ocean-shore, toward Rhea's In murtherous woman-war, by fierce red hands,

Kept savage by the right. every wife

Shall slay a husband, dyeing deep in blood

The sword of double edge!—(I wish indeed

As fair a marriage-joy to all my foes!) One bride alone shall fail to smite to

The head upon her pillow, touched

with love,, impotent of purpose, and

impelled To choose the lesser evil,—shame on her cheeks,

To blood-guilt on her hands. Which bride shall bear

A royal race in Argos. Tedious speech

Were needed to relate particulars Of these things—'tis enough that. from her seed,

Shall spring the strong He—famous with the bow.

Whose arms shall break my fetters off! Behold.

My mother Themis, that old Titaness, Delivered to me such an oracle,-But how and when, I should be long to speak,

And thou, in hearing, wouldst not gain at all.

Io. Eleleu, eleleu! How the spasm and the pain, And the fire on the brain,

Strike, burning me through! How the sting of the curse, all aflame as it flew.

Pricks me onward again! How my heart, in its terror, is spurning my breast,-

And my eyes, like the wheels of a chariot, roll round,—

I am whirled from my course, to the east, to the west,

In the whirlwind of frenzy madly inwound-

And my mouth is unbridled for anguish and hate,

And my words beat in vain, in wild storms of unrest,

On the sea of my desolate

Chorus.—Strophe.

Oh, wise was he, oh, wise was he, Who first within his spirit knew And with his tongue declared it true, That love comes best that comes unto

The equal of degree!

And that the poor and that the low Should seek no love from those above Whose souls are fluttered with the flow Of airs about their golden height,

Or proud because they see arow Ancestral crowns of light!

Antistrophe.

Oh! never, never, may ye, Fates, Behold me with your awful eyes Lift mine too fondly up the skies Where Zeus upon the purple waits!— Nor let me step too near—too

near—

To any suitor, bright from heaven!

Because I see—because I fear

This loveless maiden vexed and laden By this fell curse of Heré,—driven On wanderings dread and drear!

Epode.

Nay, grant an equal troth instead
Of nuptial love, to bind me by !—
It will not hurt—I shall not dread
To meet it in reply.

And let not love from those above Revert and fix me, as I said.

With that inevitable Eye!
I have no sword to fight that fight—
I have no strength to tread that path—

I know not if my nature hath The power to bear,—I cannot see, Whither, from Zeus's infinite.

I can have power to flee.

Prometheus. Yet Zeus howbeit most absolute of will,

Shall turn to meekness,—such a marriage-rite

He holds in preparation, which anon Shall thrust him headlong from his gerent seat

Adown the abysmal void! and so the

His father Chronos muttered in his fall, As he fell from his ancient throne and cursed.

Shall be accomplished wholly. No

From all that ruin shall the filial Zeus Find granted to him from any of his gods, Unless I teach him—I, the refuge, know,

And I, the means.—Now, therefore.

And brave the imminent doom, and fix his faith

On his supernal noises, hurtling on With restless hand, the bolt that breathes out fire—

For these things shall not help him—none of them—

Nor hinder his perdition where he falls To shame, and lower than patience.— Such a foe

He doth himself prepare against himself,—

A wonder of unconquerable Hate, An organiser of sublimer fire

Than glares in lightnings, and of grander sound

Than aught the thunder rolls, out-thundering it,—

With power to shatter in Poseidon's fist

The trident-spear, which, while it plagues the sea,

Doth shake the shores around it.

Ay, and Zeus,

Precipitated thus, shall learn at length
The difference betwixt rule and
servitude.

Chorus. Thou makest threats for Zeus of thy desires.

Prometheus. I tell you, all these things shall be fulfilled,

Even so as I desire them.

Chorus, Must we then Look out for one to come, to master Zeus?

Prometheus. These chains weigh lighter than his sorrows shall.

Chorus. How art thou not afraid

to utter such words?

Prometheus. What should I fear,

who cannot die?

Chorus. But he Can visit thee with dreader woe than death's.

Prometheus. Why, let him do it!
—I am here, prepared

For all things and their pangs.

Chorus. The wise are they Who reverence Adrasteia.

Prometheus. Reverence thou, Adore thou, flatter thou, whomever reigns,

Whenever reigning—but for me, I answer nothing. your Zeus

and reign

His brief hour out according to his

will-He will not, therefore, rule the gods too long!-

But lo! I see that courier-god of Zeus, That new-made menial of the newcrowned king-

He doubtless comes to announce us something new.

HERMES enters.

Hermes. I speak to thee, the sophist,—the talker down

against gods,-

The reverencer of men, -the thief of fire,-

I speak to thee and adjure thee! Zeus requires

Thy declaration of what marriage-rite Thus moves thy vaunt, and shall hereafter cause

His fall from empire! Do not wrap thy speech

In riddles, but speak clearly! Do not cast

Ambiguous paths, Prometheus, for my feet-

Since Zeus, thou may'st perceive, is scarcely won

To mercy, by such means.

Prometheus. A speech well-mouthed In the utterance, and full-minded in the sense.

As doth befit a servant of the gods! New gods, ye newly reign, and think forsooth

Ye dwell in towers too high for any

To take a wound there !—Have I not stood by

While two kings fell from thence? and thall I not

Behold the third, the same who rules you now,

Fall, shamed, to sudden ruin?—Do I seem

To tremble and quail before your modern gods?

Far be it from me! For thyself, depart, Re-tread thy steps in haste! To all thou hast asked

Hermes. Such a wind of pride Is less than nothing! Let him act Impelled thee of yore full sail upon these rocks!

> Prometheus. I would not barter learn thou soothly that !—

My suffering for thy service! I maintain

It is a nobler thing to serve these rocks Than live a faithful slave to father Zeus-

Thus upon scorners I retort their scorn.

Hermes. It seems that thou dost glory in thy despair. Prometheus. I, glory? would my

foes did glory so,

Of scorn by scorn,—the sinner And I stood by to see them!— Naming whom,

Thou art not unremembered.

Hermes. Dost thou charge Me also with the blame of thy mischance?

Prometheus. I tell thee, I loathe the universal gods

Who for the good I gave them rendered back

The ill of their injustice.

Hermes. Thou art mad— I hear thee raving, Titan, at the fever-height!

Prometheus. If it be madness to abhor my foes.

May I be mad!

Hermes. If thou wert prosperous, Thou wouldst be unendurable.

Prometheus. Hermes. Zeus knows not that word. Prometheus. But maturing Time Teaches all things

Hermes. Howbeit, thou hast not learnt

The wisdom yet, thou needest.

If I had. Prometheus I should not talk thus with a slave like thee

Hermes. No answer thou vouchsafest, I believe,

To the great Sire's requirement, Prometheus. Verily

I owe him grateful service,—and should pay it.

Hermes. Why, thou dost mock me, Titan, as I stood

A child before thy face.

Prometheus: No child, forsooth, But yet more foolish than a foolish child,

If thou expect that I should answer aught

Thy Zeus can ask. No torture from his hand,

Nor any machination in the world Shall force mine utterance, ere he loose, himself,

These cankerous fetters from me! For the rest.

Let him now hurl his blanching lightnings down,

And with his white-winged snows and mutterings deep

Of subterranean thunders, mix all things.

Confound them in disorder! None of this

Shall bend my sturdy will, and make me speak

The name of his dethroner who shall

Hermes. Can this avail thee? Look to it!

Prometheus.Long ago It was looked forward to,-pre-

counselled of. Hermes. Vain god, take righteous courage !--dare for once

To apprehend and front thine agonies With a just prudence!

Prometheus. Vainly dost thou chafe My soul with exhortation, as yonder

Goes beating on the rock. Oh! think no more

That I, fear-struck by Zeus to a woman's mind,

Will supplicate him, loathed as he is, With feminine upliftings of my hands, To break these chains! Far from me be the thought!

Hermes. I have indeed, methinks, said much in vain,-

For still thy heart, beneath my showers of prayers,

Lies dry and hard !-nay, leaps like a young horse

Who bites against the new bit in his teeth.

And tugs and struggles against the new-tried rein!-

Still fiercest in the feeblest thing of all, Which sophism is, -since absolute will What's strange in my fate, if I disjoined

From perfect mind is worse than weak. Behold,

Unless my words persuade thee, what a blast

And whirlwind of inevitable woe

Must sweep persuasion through thee! For at first

The Father will split up this jut of rock With the great thunder and the bolted flame,

And hide thy body where a hinge of stone

Shall catch it like an arm !- and when thou hast passed

A long black time within, thou shalt come out

To front the sun, while Zeus's winged

The strong carnivorous eagle, shall wheel down

To meet thee,—self-called to a daily feast.-

And set his fierce beak in thee, and tear off

The long rags of thy flesh, and batten deep

Upon thy dusky liver! Do not look For any end moreover to this curse, Or ere some god appear, to accept

thy pangs On his own head vicarious, and descend With unreluctant step the darks of hell. And gloomy abyss around Tartarus!— Then ponder this !—this threat is

not a growth Of vain invention! it is spoken and meant!

King Zeus's mouth is impotent to lie, Consummating the utterance by the act-

So, look to it, thou !—take heed ! and nevermore [will!

Forget good counsel, to indulge self-Chorus. Our Hermes suits his reasons to the times-

At least I think so !-since he bids thee drop

Self-will for prudent counsel. Yield to him!

When the wise err, their wisdom makes their shame.

Prometheus. Unto me the foreknower, this mandate of power, He cries, to reveal it!

suffer from hate

At the hour that I feel it! Let the locks of the lightning, all bristling and whitening,

Flash, coiling me round!
While the æther goes surging 'neath thunder and scourging

Of wild winds unbound! Let the blast of the firmament whirl from its place

The earth rooted below,—
And the brine of the ocean, in rapid

emotion,

Be it driven in the face
Of the stars up in heaven, as they
walk to and fro!

Let him hurl me anon, into Tartarus
—on—

To the blackest degree,

With Necessity's vortices strangling me down!

But he cannot join death to a fate meant for me!

Hermes. Why, the words that he speaks and the thoughts that he thinks,

Are maniacal!—Add,

If the Fate who hath bound him, should loose not the links,

He were utterly mad.

Then depart ye who groan with him,

Leaving to moan with him,—
Go in haste! lest the roar of the
thunder anearing,

Should blast you to idiocy, living and hearing.

Chorus. Change thy speech for another, thy thought for a new,

If to move me and teach me, indeed be thy care!

For thy words swerve so far from the loval and true.

That the thunder of Zeus seems more easy to bear.

How! couldst teach me to venture such vileness? Behold! I choose, with this victim, this

anguish foretold!
I recoil from the traitor in hate

and disdain,—
And I know that the curse of the treason is worse

Than the pang of the chain. Hermes. Then remember, O nymphs, what I tell you before,—

Nor, when pierced by the arrows that Até will throw you,

Cast blame on your fate, and declare evermore

That Zeus thrust you on anguish he did not foreshow you.

Nay, verily, nay! for ye perish anon For your deed—by your choice! by no blindness of doubt.

No abruptness of doom!—but by madness alone,

In the great net of Até, whence none cometh out,

Ye are wound and undone!

Prometheus. Ay! in act, now—in word, now, no more,

Earth is rocking in space!

And the thunders crash up with a roar upon roar—

And the eddying lightnings flash fire in my face—

And the whirlwinds are whirling the dust round and round—

And the blasts of the winds universal, leap free

And blow each upon each with a passion of sound,—

And other goes mingling in storm

And either goes mingling in storm with the sea!

Such a curse on my head, in a manifest dread,

From the hand of your Zeuş has been hurtled along!
O my mother's fair glory! O Æther,

enringing,
All eyes, with the sweet common light
of thy bringing,

Dost see how I suffer this wrong?

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

1833.

THE TEMPEST

A FRAGMENT

"Mors erat ante oculos."-Lucan, lib. ix.

THE forest made my home—the voiceful streams

My minstrel throng: the everlasting hills,—

Which marry with the firmament, and cry

awav.

Come from thy secret place, and try our strength,"-

Enwrapp'd me with their solemn

arms. Here, light Grew pale as darkness, scared by the

O' the forest Titans. Here, in piny state.

Reign'd Night, the Æthiopian queen, and crown'd

The charmed brow of Solitude, her spouse.

A sign was on creation. You beheld All things encolour'd in a sulph'rous

As day were sick with fear. The haggard clouds

O'erhung the utter lifelessness of air : The top boughs of the forest all aghast,

Stared in the face of Heav'n; the deep-mouth'd wind,

That hath a voice to bay the armed

Fled with a low cry like a beaten

hound: And only that askance the shadows,

Some open-beaked birds in wilderment,

Naught stirr'd abroad. All dumb did Nature seem,

In expectation of the coming storm.

It came in power. You soon might hear afar

The footsteps of the martial thunder sound

Over the mountain battlements: the sky

Being deep-stain'd with hues fantastical,

Red like to blood, and yellow like to

And black like plumes at funerals: overhead

You might behold the lightning faintly gleam

Amid the clouds which thrill and gape aside,

Unto the brazen thunder, "Come And straight again shut up their solemn jaws,

As if to interpose between Heaven's wrath

And Earth's despair. Interposition

brief! Darkness is gathering out her mighty

pall Above us, and the pent-up rain is loosed,

Down trampling in its fierce delirium.

Was not my spirit gladden'd, as with wine, To hear the iron rain, and view the

mark Of battle on the banner of the clouds?

Did I not harken for the battle-cry, And rush along the bowing woods to meet

The riding Tempest—skyev cataracts Hissing around him with rebellion vain?

Yea! and I lifted up my glorying voice

In an "All hail;" when, wildly resonant,

As brazen chariots rushing from the

As passion'd waters gushing from the rock.

thousand crashed woods, the thunder cried:

And at his cry the forest tops were shook As by the woodman's axe; and far

and near Stagger'd the mountains with a

mutter'd dread.

All hail unto the lightning | hurricelly His lurid arms are glaring through the air.

Making the face of Heav'n to show like hell !

Let him go breathe his sulphur stench about,

And, pale with death's own mission, lord the storm!

Again the gleam—the glare: turn'd to hail

Death's mission: at my feet there lay the dead!

The dead—the dead lay there! I could not view

(For Night espoused the storm, and With their unwinking, unexpressive made all dark)

Its features, but the lightning in his course

Shiver'd above a white and corpselike heap.

Stretch'd in the path, as if to show his prey,

And have a triumph ere he pass'd. Then I Crouch'd down upon the ground, and

groped about Until I touch'd that thing of flesh,

rain-drench'd. And chill, and soft. Nathless, I did

refrain My soul from natural horror! I did

lift The heavy head, half-bedded in the

Unto my knee; and pass'd my fingers

The wet face, touching every linea-

ment. Until I found the brow; and chafed

its chill. To know if life yet linger'd in its

pulse. And while I was so busied, there did

From out the entrails of the firma-

ment The lightning, who his white un-

blanching breath Blew in the dead man's face, dis-

cov'ring it As by a staring day. I knew that face-

His, who did hate me-his, whom I did hate!

I shrunk not—spake not—sprang not from the ground!

But felt my lips shake without cry or breath,

And mine heart wrestle in my breast to still

The tossing of its pulses; and a cold, Instead of living blood, o'ercreep my brow.

Albeit such darkness brooded all around.

I had dread knowledge that the open

Of that dead man were glaring up to mine,

stare;

And mine I could not shut nor turn away.

The man was my familiar. I had borne

Those eyes to scowl on me their living hate,

Better than I could bear their deadliness:

I had endured the curses of those lips. Far better than their silence. constrain'd

And awful silence !—awful peace of death!

There is an answering to all questioning,

That one word-death. Our bitterness can throw

No look upon the face of death, and live. The burning thoughts that erst my

soul illumed,

Were quench'd at once; as tapers in a pit

Wherein the vapour-witches weirdly reign

In charge of darkness. Farewell all the past! It was out-blotted from my memory's

eyes, When clay's cold silence pleaded for its sin.

Farewell the elemental war! farewell

The clashing of the shielded cloudsthe cry

Of scathed echoes! I no longer knew

Silence from sound, but wander'd far away

Into the deep Eleusis of mine heart, To learn its secret things. When armed foes

Meet on one deck with impulse vio-

The vessel quakes thro' all her oaken And shivers in the sea; so with

mine heart:

For there had battled in her solitudes, Contrary spirits; sympathy with power.

And stooping unto power;—the energy

And passiveness,—the thunder and the death!

Within me was a nameless thought:

The Janus of my soul on echoing hinge,

And said "Peace!" with a voice like War's. I bow'd,

And trembled at its voice: it gave a key,

Empower'd to open out all mysteries Of soul and flesh; of man, who doth begin,

But endeth not; of life, and after life.

Day came at last: her light show'd grey and sad,

As hatch'd by tempest, and could scarce prevail

Over the shaggy forest to imprint Its outline on the sky—expressionless, Almost sans shadow as sans radiance: An idiocy of light. I waken'd from My deep unslumb'ring dream. but

utter'd naught.

My living I uncoupled from the dead, And look'd out, 'mid the swart and sluggish air,

For place to make a grave. A mighty tree

Above me, his gigantic arms outstretch'd,

Poising the clouds. A thousand mutter'd spells

Of every ancient wind and thund'rous storm.

Had been off-shaken from his scathless bark.

He had heard distant years sweet concord yield,

And go to silence; having firmly kept Majestical companionship with Time. Anon his strength wax'd proud: his tusky roots

Forced for themselves a path on every side,

Riving the earth; and, in their savage scorn,

Casting it from them like a thing unclean,

Which might impede his naked clambering

Unto the heavens. Now blasted, peel'd, he stood,

By the gone night, whose lightning had come in

And rent him, even as it rent the man Beneath his shade: and there the strong and weak

Communion join'd in deathly agony.

There, underneath, I lent my feverish strength,

To scoop a lodgment for the traveller's corse.

I gave it to the silence and the pit, And strew'd the heavy earth on all: and then—

I—I, whose hands had form'd that silent house,—

I could not look thereon, but turn'd and wept!

O Death—O crownëd Death—palesteedëd Death!

Whose name doth make our respiration brief,

Muffling the spirit's drum! Thou, whom men know

Alone by charnel-houses, and the dark Sweeping of funeral feathers, and the scath

Of happy days,—love deem'd inviolate!

Thou of the shrouded face, which to have seen

Is to be very awful, like thyself!— Thou, whom all flesh shall see! thou, who dost call,

And there is none to answer!—thou, whose call

Changeth all beauty into what we fear,

Changeth all glory into what we tread,

Genius to silence, wrath to nothingness,

And love—not love!—thou hast no change for love!

Thou, who art Life's betroth'd, and bear'st her forth

To scare her with sad sights,—who hast thy joy

Where'er the peopled towns are dumb with plague,—

Where'er the battle and the vulture meet,—

Where'er the deep sea writhes like Laocoon

vessels split

On secret rocks, and men go gurgling down. Down, down, to lose their shrickings

in the depth!

O universal thou! who comest ave Among the minstrels, and their

tongue is tied :-Among the sophists, and their brain is still :--

Among the mourners, and their wail is done :-

Among the dancers, and their tinkling feet No more make echoes on the tombing

earth ;-Among the wassail rout, and all the

lamps

Are quench'd, and wither'd the winepouring hands!

My heart is armed not in panoply Of the old Roman iron, nor assumes The Stoic valour. 'Tis a human heart, And so confesses, with a human fear :--

That only for the hope the Cross inspires,

That only for the MAN Who died and lives.

'Twould crouch beneath thy sceptre's royalty.

With faintness of the pulse, and backward cling

To life. But knowing what I soothly know,

High-seeming Death, I dare thee and have hope,

In God's good time, of showing to thy face An unsuccumbing spirit, which

sublime May cast away the low anxieties That wait upon the flesh-the reptile

And enter that eternity to come,

Where live the dead, and only Death shall die.

A SEA-SIDE MEDITATION

"Ut per aquas quæ nunc rerum simulacra videmus. -Lucretius, lib. i.

Go. travel 'mid the hills! The summer's hand

Hath shaken pleasant freshness o'er them all.

Reneath the serpent winds, and | Go, travel 'mid the hills! There. tuneful streams

Are touching myriad stops, invisible: And winds, and leaves, and birds. and your own thoughts.

(Not the least glad) in wordless chorus, crowd

Around the thymele 1 of Nature.

And travel onward. Soon shall leaf and bird.

Wind, stream, no longer sound. Thou shalt behold

Only the pathless sky, and houseless sward:

O'er which anon are spied innumerous sails

Of fisher vessels like the wings o' the hill, And white as gulls above them, and as fast-

But sink they—sink they out of sight. And now

The wind is springing upward in your face;

And, with its fresh-toned gushings, you may hear

Continuous sound which is not of the wind,

Nor of the thunder, nor o' the cataract's Deep passion, nor o' the earthquake's

wilder pulse; But which rolls on in stern tran-

quillity, As memories of evil o'er the soul:

Boweth the bare broad Heaven.-What view you? sea—and sea!

The sea—the glorious sea! from side to side.

Swinging the grandeur of his foamv strength,

And undersweeping the horizon,on-

On-with his life and voice inscrutable.

Pause: sit you down in silence! I have read

Of that Athenian, who, when ocean raged,

Unchain'd the prison'd music of his lips,

By shouting to the billows, sound for sound.

1 The central point of the choral movements in the Greek theatre.

I marvel how his mind would let his | Binding conspicuous on our reason's tongue

Affront thereby the ocean's solemnness.

Are we not mute, or speak restrainedly, When overhead the trampling tempests go,

Dashing their lightning from their

hoofs? and when We stand beside the bier? and when

we see The strong bow down to weep-and stray among

Places which dust or mind hath sanctified?

Yea! for such sights and acts do tear

The close and subtle clasping of a chain,

Form'd not of gold, but of corroded

Whose links are furnish'd from the common mine

Of every day's event, and want, and wish: From work-times, diet-times, and

sleeping-times: And thence constructed, mean and

heavy links

Within the pandemonic walls of sense, Enchain our deathless part, constrain our strength,

And waste the goodly stature of our soul.

Howbeit, we love this bondage; we do cleave

Unto the sordid and unholy thing, Fearing the sudden wrench required to break

Those claspëd links. Behold! all sights and sounds

In air, and sea, and earth, and under earth.

All flesh, all life, all ends, are mysteries;

And all that is mysterious dreadful seems.

And all we cannot understand we fear. Ourselves do scare ourselves: we hide our sight

In artificial nature from the true, And throw sensation's veil associative On God's creation, man's intelligence; Bowing our high imaginings to eat Dust, like the serpent, once erect as

thev:

brow

feel

By rote, and act by rule (man's rule, not God's!) Until our words grow echoes, and our thoughts

Phylacteries of shame; learning to

A mechanism of spirit. Can this last?

We cannot subject No! not for aye. aye The heav'n-born spirit to the earth-

born flesh. Tame lions will scent blood, and

appetite Carnivorous glare from out their rest-

less eyes.

Passions, emotions, sudden changes, throw Our nature back upon us, till we burn.

What warmed Cyrene's fount? As poets sing, ,

The change from light to dark, from dark to light.

All that doth force this nature back on us. All that doth force the mind to view

the mind, Engend'reth what is named by men,

sublime. Thus when, our wonted valley left,

we gain The mountain's horrent brow, and mark from thence

The sweep of lands extending with the sky;

Or view the spanless plain; or turn our sight

Upon you deep immensity;—we breathe

As if our breath were marble: to and fro

Do reel our pulses, and our words are

We cannot mete by parts, but grapple all :

We cannot measure with our eye, but

And fear is on us. The extent unused. Our spirit, sends, to spirit's element. To seize upon abstractions: first on space,

The which eternity in place, I deem; And then upon eternity; till thought

secret sense,

Wherein we view ourselves, and back

At our own awful likeness; ne'erthe-

Cling to that likeness with a wonder wild.

And while we tremble, glory—proud in fear.

So ends the prose of life: and so shall

Unlock'd her poetry's magnific store. And so, thou pathless and perpetual sea.

So, o'er thy deeps, I brooded and must brood.

Whether I view thee in thy dreadful peace,

Like a spent warrior hanging in the

His glittering arms, and meditating death:

Or whether thy wild visage gath'reth shades.

What time thou marshall'st forth thy waves who hold

A covenant of storms, then roar and wind

Under the rocking rocks; as martyrs

Wheel-bound; and, dying, utter lofty words!

Whether the strength of day is young and high,

Or whether, weary of the watch, he

Pale on thy wave, and weeps himself to death :-

In storm and calm, at morn and even-

Still have I stood beside thee, and outthrown

My spirit onward on thine element,— Beyond thine element,—to tremble low

Before those feet which trod thee as they trod

Earth,—to the holy, happy peopled place.

Where there is no more sea. Yea, and my soul,

Having put on thy vast similitude, Hath wildly moaned at her proper depth,

Hath form'd a mirror from their Echoed her proper musings, veil'd in shade

> Her secrets of decay, and exercised An elemental strength, in casting up Rare gems and things of death on

fancy's shore, Till Nature said, "Enough."

Who longest dreams, Dreams not for ever; seeing day and

And corporal feebleness divide his dreams,

And, on his elevate creations weigh With hunger, cold, heat, darkness, weariness:

Else should we be like gods; else would the course

Of thought's free wheels, increased in speed and might,

By an eterne volution, oversweep The heights of wisdom, and invade her depths:

So, knowing all things, should we have all power;

For is not knowledge power? But mighty spells

Our operation sear; the Babel must, Or ere it touch the sky, fall down to earth:

The web, half form'd, must tumble from our hands,

And, ere they can resume it, lie decay'd.

Mind struggles vainly from the flesh. E'en so.

Hell's angel (saith a scroll apocryphal) Shall, when the latter days of earth have shrunk

Before the blast of God, affect his heav'n;

Lift his scarr'd brow, confirm his rebel heart,

Shoot his strong wings, and darken pole and pole,-

Till day be blotted into night; and shake

The fever'd clouds, as if a thousand storms

Throbb'd into life! Vain hope vain strength-vain flight!

God's arm shall meet God's foe, and hurl him back!

A VISION OF LIFE AND DEATH

MINE ears were deaf to melody. My lips were dumb to sound:

Where didst thou wander, O my soul, When ear and tongue were bound?

"I wandered by the stream of time, Made dark by human tears:

I threw my voice upon the waves, And they did throw me theirs."

And how did sound the waves, my soul?

And how did sound the waves? "Hoarse, hoarse, and wild!—they ever dash'd

'Gainst ruin'd thrones and graves.''

And what sight on the shore, my soul?
And what sight on the shore?

"Twain beings sate there silently, And sit there evermore."

Now tell me fast and true, my soul;

Now tell me of those twain.

"One was valothed in mourning yest

"One was yelothed in mourning vest, And one, in trappings vain.

"She in the trappings vain, was fair, And eke fantastical:

A thousand colours dyed her garb; A blackness bound them all.

"In part her hair was gaily wreath'd, In part was wildly spread:

Her face did change its hue too fast, To say 'twas pale or red.

"And when she look'd on earth, I thought

She smiled for very glee:
But when she look'd to heav'n, I
knew

That tears stood in her ee.

"She held a mirror, there to gaze:
It could no cheer bestow;
For while her beauty cast the shade.

Her breath did make it go.

"A harper's harp did lie by her,
Without the harper's hest;

A monarch's crown did lie by her, Wherein an owl had nest:

"A warrior's sword did lie by her, Grown rusty since the fight;

A poet's lamp did lie by her:—
Ah me!—where was its light?"

And what didst thou say, O my soul, Unto that mystic dame?

"I ask'd her of her tears, and eke I ask'd her of her name. "She said, she built a prince's throne:

She said, he ruled the grave; And that the levelling worm ask'd not

If he were king or slave.

"She said, she form'd a godlike tongue,

Which lofty thoughts unsheathed; Which roll'd its thunder round, and purged

The air the nations breathed.

"She said, that tongue, all eloquent, With silent dust did mate; Whereon false friends betray'd long faith.

And foes outspat their hate.

"She said, she warm'd a student's heart,

But heart and brow 'gan fade: Alas, alas! those Delphic trees Do cast an upas shade!

"She said, she lighted happy hearths,

Whose mirth was all forgot: She said, she tunëd marriage bells, Which rang when love was not.

"She said, her name was Life; and then

Out laugh'd and wept aloud,— What time the other being strange Lifted the veiling shroud.

"Yea! lifted she the veiling shroud, And breathed the icy breath; Whereat, with inward shuddering,

I knew her name was Death.

"Yea! lifted she her calm, calm brow,

Her clear cold smile on me: Whereat within my deepness, leap'd Mine immortality.

"She told me, it did move her smile, To witness how I sigh'd, Because that what was fragile brake, And what was mortal died:

"As if that kings could grasp the earth,

Who from its dust began;
As if that suns could shine at night,
Or glory dwell with man.

"She told me, she had freed his soul. Who ave did freedom love:

Who now reck'd not, were worms helow.

Or ranker worms above!

"She said, the student's heart had beat

Against its prison dim:

Until she crush'd the bars of flesh, And pour'd truth's light on him.

"She said, that they who left the hearth

For aye in sunshine dwell:

She said, the funeral tolling brought More joy than marriage bell!

"And as she spake, she spake less loud:

The stream resounded more: Anon I nothing heard but waves. That wail'd along the shore."

And what didst thou say, O my soul, Upon that mystic strife?

"I said, that Life was only Death, That only Death was Life."

EARTH

How beautiful is earth! my starry thoughts

Look down on it from their unearthly sphere,

And sing symphonious—Beautiful is earth!

The lights and shadows of her myriad hills:

The branching greenness of her myriad woods:

Her sky-affecting rocks; her zoning sea:

Her rushing, gleaming cataracts; her streams

That race below, the winged clouds on high;

Her pleasantness of vale and meadow !--

Hush! Meseemeth through the leafy trees to ring

A chime of bells to falling waters tuned:

Whereat comes heathen Zephyrus, out of breath

his hair

From off his gleesome forehead, bold and glad

With keeping blythe Dan Phœbus company :-

And throws him on the grass, though half afraid:

First glancing round, lest tempests should be nigh;

And lays close to the ground his ruddy lips,

And shapes their beauty into sound. and calls

On all the petall'd flowers, that sit beneath

In hiding-places from the rain and snow.

To loosen the hard soil, and leave their cold

Sad idlesse, and betake them up to him. They straightway hear his voice-

A thought did come And press from out my soul the heathen dream.

Mine eyes were purgëd. Straightway did I bind

Round me the garment of my strength, and heard Nature's death-shrieking-the here-

after cry, When he o' the lion voice, the

rainbow-crowned, Shall stand upon the mountains and

the sea, And swear by earth, by Heaven's throne, and Him

Who sitteth on the throne, there shall be time

No more, no more! Then, veil'd Eternity

Shall straight unveil her awful countenance

Unto the reeling worlds, and take the place

Of seasons, years, and ages. Ave and aye

Shall be the time of day. The wrinkled heav'n

Shall yield her silent sun, made blind and white

With an exterminating light: the wind.

Unchained from the poles, nor having charge

With running up the hills, and shakes | Of cloud or ocean, with a sobbing wail

A. Com

Shall rush among the stars, and swoon to death.

Yea, the shrunk earth, appearing livid pale

Beneath the red-tongued flame, shall shudder by

From out her ancient place, and leave—a void.

Yet haply by that void the saints redeem'd

May sometimes stray; when memory of sin

Ghost-like shall rise upon their holy souls;

And on their lips shall lie the name of earth

In paleness and in silentness; until Each looking on his brother, face to face.

And bursting into sudden happy tears, (The only tears undried) shall murmur—" Christ!"

THE PICTURE GALLERY AT PENSHURST

They spoke unto me from the silent ground,

They look'd unto me from the pictured wall:

The echo of my footstep was a sound

Like to the echo of their own footfall,

What time their living feet were in the hall.

I breathed where they had breathed
—and where they brought
Their souls to moralise on glory's

pall,

I walked with silence in a cloud of

thought:
So, what they erst had learn'd. I

mine own spirit taught.

Ay! with mine eyes of flesh, I did
behold

The likeness of their flesh! They, the great dead,

Stood still upon the canvas, while I told

The glorious memories to their ashes wed.

There, I beheld the Sidneys:—he, who bled

Freely for freedom's sake, bore gallantly

His soul upon his brow;—he, whose lute said

Sweet music to the land, meseem'd to be

Dreaming with that pale face, of love and Arcadie.

Mine heart had shrinëd these. And therefore past

Where these, and such as these, in mine heart's pride,

Which deem'd death, glory's other name. At last

I stay'd my pilgrim feet, and paused beside

A picture, which the shadows half did hide.

The form was a fair woman's form:

the brow
Brightly between the clustering

curls espied:
The cheek a little pale, yet seeming.

As, if the lips could speak, the paleness soon would go.

And rested there the lips, so warm and loving,

and loving,
That, they could speak, one might
be fain to guess:

Only they had been much too bright, if moving,

To stay by their own will, all motionless.

One outstretch'd hand its marble seal 'gan press

On roses which look'd fading; while the eyes,

Uplifted in a calm, proud loveliness, Seem'd busy with their flow'ry destinies,

Drawing, for ladye's heart, some moral quaint and wise.

She perish'd like her roses. I did look

On her, as she did look on them—to sigh!

Alas, alas! that the fair-written book

Of her sweet face, should be in death laid by,

As any blotted scroll! Its cruelty Poison'd a heart most gentle-pulsed of all,

1 Vandyke's portrait of Waller's Saccharissa.

For grief's stern tension maketh musical.

Unless the strain'd string break or ere the music fall.

Worship of Waller's heart! no dream of thine

Reveal'd unto thee, that the lowly

Who sate enshadow'd near thy beauty's shine,

Should, when the light was out, the life was done,

Record thy name with those by Memory won

From Time's eternal burial. I am woo'd

By wholesome thoughts this sad thought hath begun;

For mind is strengthen'd when awhile subdued,

As he who touch'd the earth, and rose with power renewed.

TO A POET'S CHILD

A FAR harp swept the sea above; A far voice said thy name in love: Then silence on the harp was cast: The voice was chain'd—the love went last I

And as I heard the melodie, Sweet-voicëd Fancy spake of thee: And as the silence o'er it came, Mine heart, in silence, sigh'd thy

I thought there was one only place, Where thou couldst lift thine orphan'd face:

A little home for prayer and woe ;— A stone above—a shroud below ;—

That evermore, that stone beside. Thy wither'd joys would form thy pride;

As palm-trees, on their South Sea bed, Make islands with the flowers they

Child of the Dead! my dream of thee Was sad to tell, and dark to see; And vain as many a brighter dream; Since thou canst sing by Babel's stream !

And turn'd it into song, therein to For here, amid the worldly crowd, 'Mid common brows, and laughter loud,

> And hollow words, and feelings sere, Child of the Dead! I meet thee here!

And is thy step so fast and light? And is thy smile so gay and bright? And canst thou smile, with cheek un-

Upon a world that frowned on him?'

The minstrel's harp is on his bier; What doth the minstrel's orphan here?

The loving moulders in the clay: The loved,—she keepeth holyday!

Tis well! I would not doom thy years

Of golden prime, to only tears. Fair girl! 'twere better that thine eyes Should find a joy in summer skies,

As if their sun were on thy fate. Be happy; strive not to be great; And go not, from thy kind apart, With lofty soul and stricken heart.

Think not too deeply: shallow thought, Like open rills, is ever sought By light and flowers; while fountains

deep Amid the rocks and shadows sleep.

Feel not too warmly; lest thou be Too like Cyrene's waters free, Which burn at night, when all

around In darkness and in chill is found.

Touch not the harp to win the wreath: Its tone is fame, its echo death! The wreath may like the laurel grow,

Yet turns to cypress on the brow!

And, as a flame springs clear and bright,

Yet leaveth ashes 'stead of light; So genius (fatal gift!) is doom'd To leave the heart it fired, consumed.

For thee, for thee, thou orphan'd one, I make an humble orison! Love all the world; and ever dream That all are true who truly seem.

Forget! for, so, 'twill move thee not, Or lightly move; to be forgot!

Be streams thy music; hills, thy mirth;

Thy chiefest light, the household hearth.

So, when grief plays her natural part, And visiteth thy quiet heart; Shall all the clouds of grief be seen To show a sky of hope between.

So, when thy beauty senseless lies, No sculptured urn shall o'er thee rise; But gentle eyes shall weep at will, Such tears as hearts like thine distil.

MINSTRELSY

"One asked her once the resun why
She hadde delyte in minstrelsie,
She answered on this manere."

—Robert de Brunne,

For ever, since my childish looks Could rest on Nature's pictured books:

For ever, since my childish tongue Could name the themes our bards have sung;

So long, the sweetness of their singing

Hath been to me a rapture bringing !— Yet ask me not the reason why I have delight in minstrelsy.

I know that much whereof I sing
Is shapen but for vanishing;
I know that summer's flower and leaf
And shine and shade are very brief,
And that the heart they brighten,
may,

Before them all, be sheathed in clay!

I do not know the reason why
I have delight in minstrelsy.

A few there are, whose smile and praise

My minstrel hope would kindly raise:
But, of those few—Death may impress

The lips of some with silentness; While some may friendship's faith resign,

And heed no more a song of mine.— Ask not, ask not the reason why I have delight in minstrelsy.

The sweetest song that ministrels sing, Will charm not Joy to tarrying;

The greenest bay that earth can grow.

Will shelter not in burning woe; A thousand voices will not cheer, When one is mute that aye is dear!—Is there, alas! no reason why I have delight in minstrelsy?

I do not know! The turf is green Beneath the rain's fast-dropping sheen.

Yet asks not why that deeper hue Doth all its tender leaves renew;—And I, like-minded, am content, While music to my soul is sent, To question not the reason why I have delight in minstrelsy.

Years pass—my life with them shall pass:

And soon, the cricket in the grass, And summer bird, shall louder sing Than she who owns a minstrel's string.

Oh, then may some, the dear and few, Recall her love, whose truth they knew:

When all forget to question why She had delight in minstrelsy!

TO THE MEMORY OF SIR UVEDALE PRICE, BART.

Farewell!—a word that human lips bestow

On all that human hearts delight to know:

On summer skies, and scenes that change as fast:

On ocean calms, and faith as fit to last;

On Life, from Love's own arms that breaks away;

On hopes that blind, and glories that decay!

And ever thus, "farewell, farewell," is said.

As round the hills of lengthening time, we tread;

As at each step the winding ways unfold

Some untried prospect which obscures .
the old;—

Perhaps a prospect brightly colour'd o'er,

Yet not with brightness that we loved before;

And dull and dark the brightest hue appears

To eyes like ours, surcharged and dim with tears.

Oft, oft we wish the winding road were past,

And yon supernal summit gain'd at last;

Where all that gradual change removed, is found

At once, for ever, as you look around;

Where every scene by tender eyes survey'd,

And lost and wept for, to their gaze is spread—

No tear to dim the sight, no shade to fall,

But Heaven's own sunshine lighting, charming all.

Farewell!—a common word—and yet*how drear

And strange it soundeth as I write it here!

How strange that thou a place of death shouldst fill,

Thy brain unlighted, and thine heart grown chill!

And dark the eye, whose plausive glance to draw,

Incited Nature brake her tyrant's law!

And deaf the ear, to charm whose organ true,

Mæonian Music tuned her harp anew!

And mute the lips where Plato's bee hath roved;

And motionless the hand that genius moved !—

Ah, friend! thou speakest not!—but still to me

Do Genius, Music, Nature, speak of thee!—

Still golden fancy, still the sounding line,

And waving wood, recall some word of thine:

Some word, some look, whose living light is o'er—

And Memory sees what Hope can see no more.

Twice, twice, thy voice hath spoken.
Twice there came

To us a change, a joy—to thee, a fame!

Thou spakest once; and every pleasant sight,
Woods waving wild, and fountains

gushing bright,

Cool copses, grassy banks, and all the dyes

Of shade and sunshine gleam'd before our eyes.

Thou spakest twice; and every pleasant sound

Its ancient silken harmony unwound, From Doric pipe and Attic lyre that lay

Enclasp'd in hands whose cunning is decay.

And now no more thou speakest! Death hath met

And won thee to him! Oh, remember'd yet!

We cannot see, and harken, and forget!

My thoughts are far. I think upon the time,

When Foxley's purple hills and woods sublime

Were thrilling at thy step; when thou didst throw

Thy burning spirit on the vale below, To bathe its sense in beauty. Lovely ground!

There, never more shall step of thine resound!

There, Spring again shall come, but find thee not,

And deck with humid eyes her favourite spot;

Strew tender green on paths thy foot forsakes,

And make that fair, which Memory saddest makes.

For me, all sorrowful, unused to raise

A minstrel song and dream not of thy praise,

Upon thy grave my tuneless harp I lay, Nor try to sing what only tears can say.

So warm and fast the ready waters swell—

So weak the faltering voice thou knewest well!

 1 Essay on the Picturesque,
 2 Essay on the Pronunciation of the Ancient Languages. voice before;

Now, thoughts of them but make it tremble more;

And leave its theme to others, and depart

To dwell within the silence where thou art.

THE AUTUMN

Go, sit upon the lofty hill, And turn your eyes around, Where waving woods and waters wild Do hymn an autumn sound. The summer sun is faint on them—

The summer flowers depart— Sit still—as all transform'd to stone, Except your musing heart.

How there you sat in summer-time,

May yet be in your mind; And how you heard the green woods

Beneath the freshening wind.

Though the same wind now blows around. You would its blast recall:

For every breath that stirs the trees Doth cause a leaf to fall.

Oh! like that wind, is all the mirth That flesh and dust impart:

We cannot bear its visitings, When change is on the heart. Gay words and jests may make us smile.

When Sorrow is asleep; But other things must make us smile, When Sorrow bids us weep!

The dearest hands that clasp our hands,—

Their presence may be o'er: The dearest voice that meets our ear, That tone may come no more!

Youth fades; and then, the joys of vouth,

Which once refresh'd our mind, Shall come—as, on those sighing woods.

The chilling autumn wind.

Hear not the wind-view not the woods:

Look out o'er vale and hill: In spring, the sky encircled them-The sky is round them still.

Thy words of kindness calm'd that | Come autumn's scathe-come winter's cold-

> Come change—and human fate! Whatever prospect Heaven doth bound.

Can ne'er be desolate.

THE DEATH-BED OF TERESA DEL RIEGO

-" Si fia muta ogni altra cosa, al fine Parlerà il mio morire. E ti dirà la morte il mio martire." Guarini.

The room was darken'd; but a wan lamp shed

Its light upon a half-uncurtain'd bed.

Whereon the widow'd sate. Blackly as death

Her veiling hair hung round her, and no breath

Came from her lips to motion it. Between

Its parted clouds, the calm fair face was seen

In a snow paleness, and snow silentness.

With eyes unquenchable, whereon did press A little, their white lids, so taught to

By weights of frequent tears wept secretly.

Her hands were clasp'd and raisedthe lamp did fling

A glory on her brow's meek suffering.

Beautiful form of woman! seeming made

Alone to shine in mirrors, there to braid

The hair and zone the waist—to garland flowers-

To walk like sunshine through the orange bowers-

To strike her land's guitar-and often see

In other eyes how lovely hers must be.

Grew she acquaint with anguish? Did she sever

For ever from the one she loved for

To dwell among the strangers? Ay! and she.

Who shone most brightly in that I parted from thee, in such way festive glee,

Sate down in this despair most patiently.

Some hearts are Niobes! In grief's down-sweeping,

They turn to very stone from overweeping,

And after, feel no more. Hers did

In life, which is the power of feeling pain, Till pain consumed the life so call'd

below. She heard that he was dead !--she ask'd not how-

For he was dead! She wail'd not o'er his urn.

For he was dead—and in her hands, should burn

His vestal flame of honour radiantly. Sighing would dim its light-she did not sigh.

She only died. They laid her in the ground,

Whereon th' unloving tread, and accents sound Which are not of her Spain. She

left behind, For those among the strangers who

were kind Unto the poor heart-broken, her

dark hair. It once was gauded out with jewels

It swept her dying pillow—it doth lie Beside me (thank the giver), droop-

And very long and bright! Its tale doth go

Half to the dumb grave, half to lifetime woe,

Making the heart of man, if manly, ring

Like Dodonæan brass, with echoing.

TO VICTOIRE, ON HER MARRIAGE

VICTOIRE! I knew thee in thy land, Where I was strange to all: I heard thee; and were strange to me The words thy lips let fall.

I loved thee—for the Babel curse Was meant not for the heart: As those who love may part.

And now a change hath come to us. A sea doth rush between! I do not know if we can be Again as we have been.

I sit down in mine English land, Mine English hearth beside; And thou, to one I never knew, Art plighted for a bride.

It will not wrong thy present joy, With bygone days to wend; Nor wrongeth it mine English hearth, To love my Gallic friend.

Bind, bind the wreath! the slender ring

Thy wedded finger press! May he who calls thy love his own, Call so thine happiness!

Be he Terpander to thine heart, And string fresh strings of gold, Which may out-give new melodies, But never mar the old!

And though I clasp no more thy hand In my hand, and rejoice-And though I see thy face no more, And hear no more thy voice-

Farewell, farewell !-let thought of me Visit thine heart! There is In mine the very selfish prayer That prayeth for thy bliss!

TO A BOY

When my last song was said for thee, Thy golden hair swept, long and free, Around thee: and a dove-like tone Was on thy voice—or Nature's own: And every phrase and word of thine Went out in lispings infantine! Thy small steps faltering round our

hearth-Thine een out-peering in their mirth— Blue een! that, like thine heart,

seem'd given To be, for ever, full of heaven! Wert thou, in sooth, made up of glee, When my last song was said for thee?

And now more years are finished,-For thee another song is said. Thy voice hath lost its cooing tone; The lisping of thy words is gone:

Thy step treads firm—thine hair not

Round thee its length of golden rings-

Departed, like all lovely things! Yet art thou still made up of glee, When my now song is said for thee.

Wisely and well responded they, Who cut thy golden hair away, What time I made the bootless prayer,

That they should pause awhile, and

spare.

They said, "its sheen did less agree With boyhood than with infancy." And thus I know it are must be. Before the revel noise is done, The revel lamps pale one by one.

Ay! Nature loveth not to bring Crown'd victims to life's labouring. The mirth-effulgent eye appears Less sparkling—to make room for tears:

After the heart's quick throbs depart, We lose the gladness of the heart: And, after we have lost awhile The rose o' the lip, we lose its smile; As Beauty could not bear to press Near the death-pyre of Happiness.

This seemeth but a sombre dream? It hath more pleasant thoughts than seem.

The older a young tree doth grow, The deeper shade it sheds below; But makes the grass more green-

More fresh, than had the sun been

And thus our human life is found. Albeit a darkness gathers round: For patient virtues, that their light

May shine to all men, want the night: And holy Peace, unused to cope, Sits meekly at the tomb of Hope, Saying that "she is risen!"

Then I Will sorrow not at destiny,— Though from thine eyes, and from thine heart,

The glory of their light depart: Though on thy voice, and on thy brow, now:

Though thou no more be made of glee, When my next song is said for thee.

REMONSTRANCE

Oн, say not it is vain to weep That deafen'd bier above; Where genius has made room for death.

And life is past from love; That tears can never his bright looks And tender words restore:

I know it is most vain to weep-And therefore weep the more!

Oh, say not I shall cease to weep When years have wither'd by; That ever I shall speak of joy, As if he could reply;

That ever mine unquivering lips Shall name the name he bore: I know that I may cease to weep,

And therefore weep the more!

Say, Time, who slew mine happiness, Will leave to me my woe; And woe's own stony strength shall chain

These tears' impassion'd flow: Or say, that these, my ceaseless tears, May life to death restore;

For then my soul were wept away, And I should weep no more!

REPLY.

To weep awhile beside the bier, Whereon his ashes lie. Is well!—I know that rains must fall When clouds are in the sky:

I know, to die—to part, will cloud The brightest spirit o'er; And yet, wouldst thou for ever weep,

When he can weep no more? Fix not thy sight, so long and fast,

Upon the shroud's despair: Look upward unto Zion's hill, For death was also there !

And think, "The death, the scourge, the scorn,

My sinless Saviour bore— The curse—the pang, too deep for tears-

That I should weep no more!"

EPITAPH

Should come a fiercer change than BEAUTY, who softly walkest all thy days

In silken garment to the tunes of praise;—
Lover, whose dreamings by the green-

bank'd river,

Where once she wander'd, fain would last for ever;—

King, whom the nations scan, adoring scan,

And shout "a god," where sin hath marked thee man;—

Bard, on whose brow the Hyblan dew remains,

Albeit the fever burneth in the veins;—

Hero, whose sword in tyrant's blood is hot;—

Sceptic, who doubting, wouldst be doubted not;—

Man, whosoe'er thou art, whate'er thy trust;—

Respect thyself in me;—thou treadest dust.

THE IMAGE OF GOD

"I am God, and there is none like me."

—Isaiah, xlvi. 9.

"Christ, who is the image of God."

—2 Corinthians, iv. 4.

Thou! art thou like to God?
(I asked this question of the glorious sun)

Thou high unwearied one, Whose course in heat, and light, and life is run?

Eagles may view thy face—clouds can assuage

Thy fiery wrath—the sage Can mete thy stature—thou shalt fade with age.

Thou art not like to God.

Thou! art thou like to God?
(I asked this question of the bounteous earth)

O thou, who givest birth
To forms of beauty and to sounds of
mirth?

In all thy glory works the worm decay—

Thy golden harvests stay
For seed and toil—thy power shall
pass away.

Thou art not like to God.

Thou! art thou like to God?
(I asked this question of my death-less soul)

O thou, whose musings roll Above the thunder, o'er creation's whole?

Thou art not. Sin, and shame, and agony

Within thy deepness lie:

They utter forth their voice in thee, and cry,

"Thou art not like to God."

Then art Thou like to God;
Thou, Who didst bear the sin, and shame, and woe—

O Thou, Whose sweat did flow— Whose tears did gush—Whose brow was dead and low?

No grief is like Thy grief; no heart can prove
Love like unto Thy love;
And none, sawe only Thou—below,
above,—

O God, is like to God!

THE APPEAL

CHILDREN of our England! stand On the shores that girt our land; The ægis of whose cloud-white rock Braveth Time's own battle shock. Look above the wide, wide world; Where the northern blasts have furl'd

Their numbëd wings amid the snows, Muttering in a forced repose—
Or where the madden'd sun on high Shakes his torch athwart the sky, Till within their prison sere, Chainëd earthquakes groan for fear! Look above the wide, wide world, Where a gauntlet Sin hath hurl'd To astonied Life; and where Death's gladiatorial smile doth glare, On making the arena bare. Shout aloud the words that show Jesus in the sands and snow;—Shout aloud the words that free, Over the perpetual sea.

Speak ye. As a breath will sweep Avalanche from Alpine steep, So the spoken word shall roll Fear and darkness from the soul. Are ye men, and love not man? Love ye, and permit his ban? Can ye, dare ye, rend the chain Wrought of common joy and pain, Clasping with its links of gold, Man to man in one strong hold?

Lo! if the golden links ye sever, Ye shall make your heart's flesh quiver,

And wheresoe'er the links are reft, There, shall be a blood-stain left. To earth's remotest rock repair, Ye shall find a vulture there: Though for others sorrowing not, Your own tears shall still be hot: Though ye play a lonely part; Though ye bear an iron heart;—Woe, like Echetus, still must Grind your iron into dust.

But, children of our Britain, ye Rend not man's chain of sympathy; To those who sit in woe and night, Denying tears and hiding light. Ye have stretch'd your hands abroad With the Spirit's sheathless sword: Ye have spoken—and the tone To earth's extremest verge hath gone: East and west sublime it rolls, Echoed by a million souls! The wheels of rapid circling years, Erst hot with crime, are quench'd in tears.

Rocky hearts wild waters pour,
That were chain'd in stone before:
Bloody hands, that only bare
Hilted sword, are clasp'd in prayer:
Savage tongues, that wont to fling
Shout of war in deathly ring,
Speak the name which angels sing.
Dying lips are lit the while
With a most undying smile,
Which reposing there, instead
Of language, when the lips are dead,
Saith,—" No sound of grief or pain
Shall haunt us when we move again."

Children of our country! brothers To the children of all others! Shout aloud the words that show Jesus in the sands and snow;— Shout aloud the words that free, Over the perpetual sea!

IDOLS

How weak the gods of this world are— And weaker yet their worship made me!

I have been an idolater Of three—and three times they betray'd me!

Mine oldest worshipping was given To natural Beauty, aye residing In bowery earth and starry heav'n, In ebbing sea, and river gliding.

But natural Beauty shuts her bosom
To what the natural feelings tell!
Albeit 'I sigh'd, the trees would blossom—

Albeit I smiled, the blossoms fell.

Then left I earthly sights, to wander Amid a grove of name divine, Where bay-reflecting streams meander, And Moloch Fame hath rear'd a shrine.

Not green, but black, is that reflection;

On rocky beds those waters lie; That grove hath chillness and dejection,—

How could I sing? I had to sigh.

Last, human Love, thy Lares greeting, To rest and warmth I vow'd my years.

To rest? how wild my pulse is beating!

To warmth? ah me! my burning tears.

Ay, they may burn—though thou be frozen
By death, and changes wint 'ring

on! Fame! — Beauty! — idols madly

chosen—
Were yet of gold; but thou art
stone!

Crumble like stone! my voice no longer

Shall wail their names, who silent be:

There is a voice that soundeth stronger—

"My daughter, give thine heart to Me."

Lord! take mine heart! O first and Lord! teach us so to watch and pray, fairest.

Whom all creation's ends shall hear:

Who deathless love in death declarest!

None else is beauteous-famousdear 1

HYMN

"Lord. I crwunto Thee: make haste unto me." Psalms, cxli. 1. "The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him."—Psalms, cxlv. 18.

Since without Thee we do no good, And with Thee do no ill,

Abide with us in weal and woe .-In action and in will.

In weal,—that while our lips confess The Lord Who "gives," we may Remember, with an humble thought. The Lord Who "takes away."

In woe, -that, while to drowning tears Our hearts their joys resign, We may remember Who can turn Such water into wine.

By hours of day, -that when our feet O'er hill and valley run, We still may think the light of truth More welcome than the sun.

By hours of night,—that when the air

Its dew and shadow yields, We still may hear the voice of God In silence of the fields.

death,

All soundless, deaf, and deep:

That death may come like sleep.

Abide with us, abide with us, While flesh and soul agree:

And when our flesh is only dust, Abide our souls with Thee.

WEARINESS

MINE eyes are weary of surveying The fairest things, too soon decaying: Mine ears are weary of receiving

The kindest words-ah, past believing!

Weary my hope, of ebb and flow: Weary my pulse, of tunes of woe: My trusting heart is weariest!

I would—I would, I were at rest!

For me, can earth refuse to fade? For me, can words be faithful made? Will my embittered hope be sweet? My pulse forego the human beat? No! Darkness must consume mine eve-

Silence, mine ear—hope pulse die-

And o'er mine heart a stone be press'd-

Or vain this,-" Would I were at rest!"

There is a land of rest deferr'd: Nor eve hath seen, nor ear hath heard,

Nor Hope hath trod the precinct o'er; For hope beheld is hope no more! There, human pulse forgets its tone— There, hearts may know as they are known!

Oh! then sleep comes on us like Oh for dove's wings, thou dwelling blest.

To fly to thee, and be at rest!

THE SERAPHIM

[1838]

"I look for Angels' songs, and hear Him cry."-Giles Fletcher.

PART THE FIRST

It is the time of the Crucifixion: and the Father of the Crucified has directed heaven, of whom all have departed but the two Seraphim, Apor the Strong and ZERAH the Bright One.

toward earth the angels of His The place is the outer side of the shut heavenly gate.]

Ador. O SERAPH, pause no more! Beside this gate of Heaven we stand alone.

Zcrah. Of Heaven!

Ador. Our brother hosts are gone-Zerah. Are gone before. And the golden harps the Ador. angels bore

To help the songs of their desire, Still burning from their hands

Lie without touch or tone Upon the glass-sea shore.

Zerah. Silent upon the glass-sea shore!

Ador. There the Shadow from the throne

Formless with infinity

Hovers o'er the crystal sea-Awfuller than light derived, And red with those primæval heats

Whereby all life hath lived. Our visible God, our heavenly seats!

Beneath us sinks the pomp Ador. angelical,

Cherub and seraph, powers and virtues, all,-

The roar of whose descent hath died

To a still sound, as thunder into

Immeasurable space spreads magnified

plane

The worlds slid out on. What a

And eddy of wings innumerous, crossed

By trailing curls that have not lost

The glitter of the God-smile

On every prostrate angel's head!

What gleaming up of hands that fling Their homage, in retorted

rays, From high instinct of wor-

shipping, And habitude of praise.

Rapidly they drop below

Pointed palm and wing and hair.

Indistinguishable show us Only pulses in the air

Throbbing with a fiery beat,-As if a new creation heard

Some divine and plastic word, And trembling at its new-found being.

Awakened at our feet.

Ador. Zerah, do not wait for see-

His voice-His,-that thrills us

As we our harpstrings—uttered

Behold the Holy in His woe-

And all are gone, save thee and— Zerah. Thee! Ador. I stood the nearest to the

In hierarchical degree,

throne

What time the voice said Go. And whether I was moved alone By the storm-pathos of the tone

Which swept through Heaven the

alien name of woe, Or whether the subtle glory broke

Through my stong and shielding wings,

Bearing to my finite essence Incapacious of their presence, Infinite imaginings-

With that thick life, along the None knoweth save the Throned Who spoke.

> But I, who, at creation, stood upright And heard the God-Breath move,

> Shaping the words that lightened-"Be there light,"-

Nor trembled but with love. Now fell down shudderingly,

My face upon the pavement whence I towered;

As if in mine immortal overpowered By God's eternity!

Zerah. Let me wait!—let me wait !-

Ador. Nay, gaze not backward through the gate!

God fills our heaven with God's own solitude

Till all its pavements glow. His Godhead being no more subdued

By itself, to glories low Which seraphs can sustain, What if thou, in gazing so, Shouldst behold but only one Attribute, the veil undone— Even that to which we dare to press

Nearest, for its gentleness-

Ay, His love!

How the deep ecstatic pain Thy being's strength would capture!

Without a language for the rapture, Without a music strong to come And set the adoration free,

For ever, ever, wouldst thou be Amid the general chorus dumb, God-stricken to seraphic agony !-Or, brother, what if on thine eves

In vision bare should rise The life-fount, whence His hand did gather

With solitary force Our immortalities!-Straightway how thine own would wither,

> Falter like a human breath, And shrink into a point like death.

By gazing on its source!-My words have imaged dread.

Meekly hast thou bent thine head,

And dropt thy wings in languishment

Overclouding foot and face, As if God's throne were emi-

nent Before thee, in the place.

Yet not-not so, O loving spirit and meek, dost thou fulfil

The supreme Will. Not for obeisance but obedience, Give motion to thy wings! Depart | Had left a silent echo in his ray?

from hence-The voice said "Go." Zerah. Beloved, I depart. His will is as a spirit within my

A portion of the being I inherit-His will is mine obedience.

resemble A flame all undefiled though

tremble-

I go and tremble. Love me, O beloved!

O thou, who stronger art, And standest ever near the Infi-

nite.

Pale with the light of Light! Love me, beloved! me, more newly made.

More feeble, more afraid-And let me hear with mine thy pinions moved.

As close and gentle as the loving

That love being near, heaven may not seem so far.

Ador. I am near thee and I love thee.

Were I loveless, from thee gone.

Love is round, beneath, above thee-

God, the omnipresent One. Spread the wing, and lift the brow-

Well - beloved, what thou?

Zerah. I fear, I fear-Ador. What fear? Zerah. The fear of earth. Ador. Of earth, the God-created and God-praised

In the hour of birth?

Where every night, the moon in light Doth lead the waters silver-

faced? Where every day, the sun doth

A rapture to the heart of all

The leafy and reeded pastoral,

As if the joyous shout which burst

From angel lips to see him first.

Zerah. Of earth—the God-created and God-curst:

Where man is, and the thorn: Where sun and moon have borne,

No light to souls forlorn.

Where Eden's tree of life no more uprears

it Its spiral leaves and fruitage, but instead

The vew-tree bows its melancholy

head. And all the undergrasses kills and seres.

Ador. A fear of earth, the weak Made and unmade?

Where men that faint, do strive for crowns that fade;

Where, having won the profit which they seek,

They lie beside the sceptre and the gold

With fleshless hands that cannot wield or hold.

And the stars shine in their unwinking eyes?

Zerah. A fear of earth the bold. Where the blind matter wrings An awful potence out of impotence.

Bowing the spiritual things To the things of sense: Where the human will replies With ay and no,

Because the human pulse is quick or

Where Love succumbs to Change, With only his own memories, for revenge,

And the fearful mystery—

Ador. Called Death? Zerah. Nay! Death is fearful,but who saith

"To die," is comprehensible. What's fearfuller, thou knowest

Though the utterance be not for

Lest it blanch thy lips from glory-

Av! the cursed thing that moved A shadow of ill, long times

Across our heaven's own shining

And when it vanished, some

who were On thrones of holy empire there,

Did reign—were seen—were never more.

Come nearer, O beloved! Ador. I am near thee. Didst thou bear thee

Ever to this earth?

Before !-Zerah.

When thrilling from His hand Its lustrous path with spheric

song, The earth was deathless, sorrow-

less. Unfearing, then, pure feet might

press The grasses brightening with their feet,

For God's own voice-did mix its sound

In a solemn confluence oft With the rivers' flowing round, And the life-tree's waving soft. Beautiful new earth, strange!

Ador. Hast thou seen it sincethe change?

Zerah. Nay! or wherefore should I fear To look upon it now?

I have beheld the ruined things Only in depicturings

Of angels from an earthly mission.

Strong one, even upon thy brow When, with task completed,

given Back to us in that transi-

tion, I have beheld thee silent stand,

Abstracted in the seraph band— Without a smile in heaven.

Ador. Then thou wert not one of those

Whom the loving Father chose, In visionary pomp to sweep O'er Judæa's grassy places,

O'er the shepherds and the sheep,-

Though thou art so tender?dimming

All the stars except one star, With their brighter kinder faces.

And using heaven's own tune in hymning,

While deep response from earth's own mountains ran,

"Peace upon earth—goodwill to man."

Zerah. "Glory to God!"—I said Amen afar.

And they who from that earthly mission are,

Within mine ears have told

That the seven everlasting Spirits did hold

With such a sweet and prodigal constraint

The meaning yet the mystery of the song,

The while they sang it, on their natures strong,

That, gazing down on earth's dark stedfastness And speaking the new peace in

And speaking the new peace in promises,

The love and pity made their voices faint

Into that low and tender music, keeping

The place in heaven, of what on earth is weeping.

Ador. Peace upon earth! Come down to it.

Zerah. Ah me! I hear thereof uncomprehendingly. Peace where the tempest, where the sighing is,

And worship of the idol, 'stead of His?

Ador. Yea, peace, where He is.

Zerah.

He !

Say it again.

Ador. Where He is.

Zerah. Can it be
That earth retains a tree

Whose laves, like Eden foliage, can

be swayed

By breathing of His voice, nor shrink

and fade?

Ador. There is a tree!—it hath
no leaf nor root.

Upon it hangs a curse for all its fruit:

Its shadow on His head is laid.

For He, the crowned Son,

Has left His crown and

throne,—

Walks earth in Adam's clay, Eve's snake to bruise and slay—

Zerah. Walks earth in clay?

Ador. And walking in the clay which He created,

He through it shall touch death.
What do I utter? what, conceive?
Did breath

Of demon howl it in a blasphemy?

Or was it mine own voice, informed, dilated,

By the seven confluent Spirits ?—
Speak—answer me!

Who said man's victim was his Deity?

Zerah. Beloved, beloved, the word came forth from thee,

Thine eyes are rolling a tempestuous light,

Above, below, around,

As putting thunder-questions without cloud,

Reverberate without sound, fo universal nature's depth a

To universal nature's depth and height.

The tremor of an inexpressive thought

Too self-amazed to shape itself aloud,

O'erruns the awful curving of thy lips: .

And while thine hands are stretched above,
As newly they had caught

Some lightning from the Throne or showed the Lord Some retributive sword—

Thy brows do alternate with wild eclipse

And radiance—with contrasted wrath and love—

As God had called thee to a seraph's part,

With a man's quailing heart.

Ador. O heart—O heart of man!
O ta'en from human clay,
To be no seraph's, but Jehovah's
own!

Made holy in the taking. And yet unseparate

From death's perpetual ban, And human feelings sad and passionate!

Still subject to the treacherous forsaking

Of other hearts, and its own stedfast pain!

O heart of man—of God! which God hath ta'en

From out the dust, with its humanity Mournful and weak yet innocent

around it, And bade its many pulses beating lie Beside that incommunicable stir

Of Deity wherewith He interwound it.

O man! and is thy nature so defiled, That all that holy Heart's devout law-keeping,

And low pathetic beat in deserts And gushings pitiful of tender weep-

For traitors who consigned it to such

woe-

That all could cleanse thee notwithout the flow

Of blood-the life-blood-His-and streaming so?

O earth, the thundercleft, windshaken !--where

The louder voice of "blood and blood" doth rise!

Hast thou an altar for this sacrifice? O heaven-O vacant throne! O crowned hierarchies, that wear your

crown

When His is put away! Are ye unshamed, that ye cannot dim Your alien brightness to be liker Him,-

Assume a human passion-and down-

Your sweet secureness for congenial fears-

And teach your cloudless ever-burning eyes

The mystery of His tears? Zerah. I am strong, I am strong! Were I never to see my heaven again.

I would wheel to earth like the tempest rain

Which sweeps there with exultant sound

To lose its life as it reaches the ground.

I am strong, I am strong!

Away from mine inward vision swim The shining seats of my heavenly birth-

I see but His, I see but Him-The Maker's steps on His cruel earth. Will the bitter herbs of earth grow sweet

To me, as trodden by His feet? Will the vexed, accurst humanity, As worn by Him, begin to be A blessed, yea, a sacred thing, For love, and awe, and ministering? I am strong, I am strong!

By our angel ken, shall we survey

His loving smile through His woeful clav ?

I am swift, I am strong-The love is bearing me along, Ador. One love is bearing two along.

PART THE SECOND

above Judæa. ADOR and Mid air. ZERAH are a little apart from the visible Angelic Hosts.]

Ador. BELOVED! dost-thou see ?-Thee.—thee. Zerah.

Thy burning eyes already are Grown wild and mournful as a star

Whose occupation is for ave To look upon the place of clay

Whereon thou lookest now! The crown is fainting on thy brow

To the likeness of a cloud-Thy forehead's self, a little bowed

From its aspect high and holy, As it would in meekness meet Some seraphic melancholy. Thy very wings that lately

flung An outline clear, do flicker here,

And wear to each a shadow hung, Dropped across thy feet. In these strange contrasting

glooms Stagnant with the scent of

tombs. Seraph faces, O my brother, Show awfully to one another.

Ador. Dost thou see ? Even so-I see Zerah.

Our empyreal company; Alone the memory of their

brightness Left in them, as in thee!

The circle upon circle, tier on tier, Piling earth's hemisphere With heavenly infiniteness; Above us and around,

Straining the whole horizon like a bow;

Their songful lips divorced from all sound,

A darkness gliding down their silvery glances,-

Bowing their stedfast solemn countenances

As if they heard God speak and could not glow.

Ador. Look downward! dost thou

Zerah. And wouldst thou press that vision on my words?

Doth not Earth speak enough Of change and of undoing Without a Seraph's witness?

Oceans rough

With tempest,—pastoral swards Displaced by fiery deserts,—mountains ruing

The bolt fallen yesterday, That shake their piny heads, as who

would say,
"We are too beautiful for our
decay—"

Shall seraphs speak of these things?

Let alone

Earth, to her earthly moan.

Voice of all things. Is there no moan but hers?

Ador. Hearest thou the attestation

Of the roused Universe, Like a desert lion shaking Dews of silence from its mane?— With an irrepressive passion Uprising at once, Rising up, and forsaking Its solemn state in the circle of suns,

To attest the pain
Of Him who stands (O patience sweet!)

In His own hand-prints of creation, With human feet?

Voice of all things. Is there no moan but ours?
Zerah. Forms, spaces, motions

Zerah. Forms, spaces, motions wide,
O meek, insensate things,

O congregated matters! who inherit, Instead of vital powers, Impulsions God-supplied—Instead of influent spirit, A clear informing beauty—Instead of creature-duty, Submission calm as rest! Lights, without feet or wings, In golden courses sliding! Glooms, stagnantly subsiding.

Whose lustrous heart away was prest Into the argent stars! Ye crystal, firmamental bars, That hold the skyey waters free From tide or tempest's ecstasy! Airs universal! thunders lorn, That wait your lightning in cloudcave

Hewn out by the winds! O brave And subtle Elements! the Holy Hath charged me by your voice with folly,1

Enough, the mystic arrow leaves its wound.

Return ye to your silences inborn, Or to your inarticulated sound!

Ador. Zerah.

Zerah. Wilt thou rebuke? God hath rebuked me, brother.—1 am weak.

Ador. Zerah, my brother Zerah!
—could I speak

Of thee, 'twould be of love to thee, Zerah. Thy look Is fixed on earth, as mine upon thy face!—

Where shall I seek Him?-

I have thrown One look upon earth—but one— Over the blue mountain-lines, Over the forests of palms and pines;

Over the harvest-lands golden; Over the valleys that fold in The gardens and vines— He is not there!

He is not there!
All these are unworthy
Those footsteps to bear,
Before which, bowing down

I would fain quench the stars of my crown

In the dark of the earthy.

Where shall I seek Him?

No reply?

Hath language left thy lips, to place

Its vocal in thine eye?
Ador, Ador! are we come
To a double portent, that
Dumb matter grows articulate
And songful seraphs dumb?
Ador, Ador!—

Ador. I constrain
The passion of my silence.
None

Of those places gazed upon, Are dull enow to fit His pain. Unto Him, whose forming word

1 "His angel He charged with folly."-Job, iv. 18.

Gave to Nature flower and sward,

She hath given back again,
For the myrtle, the thorn,—
For the sylvan calm, the human
scorn.

Still, still, reluctant Seraph, gaze beneath!

There is a city-

Zerah. Temple and tower, Palace and purple would droop like a flower

(As a cloud at our breath), If He neared in His state The outermost gate.

Ador. Ah me, not so
In the state of a King, did the
victim go!

And Thou who hangest mute of speech

'Twixt heaven and earth, with forehead yet

Stained by the bloody sweat, God! man! Thou hast foregone Thy throne in each!

Zerah. Thine eyes behold Him?
Ador. Yea, below.
Track the gazing of mine eyes,

Naming God within thine heart That its weakness may depart And the vision rise.

Seest thou yet, beloved?

Zerah. I see
Beyond the city, crosses three,
And mortals three that hang
thereon,

'Ghast and silent to the sun: Round them blacken and welter and press

Staring multitudes, whose father Adam was—whose brows are dark

With his Cain's corroded mark,— Who curse with looks. Nay let me rather

Turn unto the wilderness.

Ador. Turn not. God dwells with men.

Zerah. Above

Zerah. Above He dwells with angels, and they love. Can these love? With the living's pride

They stare at those who die,—who hang

In their sight and die. They bear the streak

Of the crosses' shadow, black not wide,

To fall on their heads, as it swerves aside

When the victims' pang Makes the crosses creak.

Ador. The cross—the cross!

Zerah. A woman kneels

The mid cross under—

The mid cross under—
With white lips asunder
And motion on each,—
They throb, as she feels,
With a spasm, not a speech;
And her lids, close as sleep;
Are less calm—for the eyes
Have made room there to
weep

Drop on drop-

Ador. Weep? Weep blood,
All women, all men!
He sweated it, He,
For your pale womanhood
And base manhood. Agree
That these water-tears, then,
Are vain, mocking like laughter!

 Weep blood!—Shall the flood Of salt curses, whose foam is the darkness, on roll

Forward, on, from the strand of the storm-beaten years—

And back from the rocks of the dreadful hereafter,

And up, in a coil, from the present's wrath-spring,

Yea down from the windows of

Yea, down from the windows of Heaven opening,—

Deep calling to deep as they meet on His soul,—

And men weep only tears?

Zerah. Little drops in the lapse!

And yet, Ador, perhaps

It is all that they can.

Tears! the lovingest man

Has no better bestowed

Upon man.

Ador. Nor on God.

Zerah. Do all-givers need gifts?

If the Giver said "Give," the first motion would slay

Our Importals the other mould make

Our Immortals, the echo would ruin away

The same worlds which He made.
Why, what angel uplifts
Such a music, so clear,
It may seem in God's ear

Worth more than a woman's hoarse weeping? And thus,

Pity tender as tears, I above thee would speak,

Thou woman that weepest! weep unscorned of us!

I, the tearless and pure, am but loving and weak.

Ador. Speak low, my brother, low,—and not of love,

Or human or angelic! Rather stand Before the throne of that Supreme above.

In whose infinitude the secrecies

Of thing own being lie hid—and

Of thine own being lie hid,—and lift thine hand

Exultant, saying, "Lord God, I am wise!"—

Than utter here, "I love."

Zerah. And yet thine eyes
Do utter it. They melt in tender
light,

The tears of Heaven.

Ador. Of Heaven. Ah me! Zerah. Ador!

Ador. Say on. Zerah. The crucified are three.

Beloved, they are unlike.

Ador. Unlike.

Ador. Unlike.

Zevah. For one
Is as a man who singed and

still

Doth wear the wicked will,

The hard malign life-energy, Tossed outward, in the parting soul's

disdain, On brow and lip that cannot change

again.

Ador. And one—

Zerah. Has also sinned. And yet (O marvel!) doth the Spirit-wind

Blow white those waters?—Death upon his face

Is rather shine than shade, A tender shine by looks beloved made. He seemeth dying in a quiet place, And less by iron wounds in hands and

feet
Than heart-broke by new joy too
sudden and sweet.

Ador. And One!—

Zerah. And ONE—
Ador. Why dost thou pause?
Zerah. God! God

Spirit of my spirit! Who movest

Through seraph veins in burning deity,

To light the quenchless pulses !— Ador. But hast trod
The depths of love in Thy peculiar

nature;

And not in any Thou hast made and lovest

In narrow seraph hearts!—

Zerah. Above, Creator!

Within, Upholder!—

Ador. And below, below, The creature's and the upholden's sacrifice!

zerah. Why do I pause?—
Ador. There is a silentness
That answers thee enow,—

That, like a brazen sound Excluding others, doth ensheathe us round.—

Hear it! It is not from the visible skies,

Though they are still,

Unconscious that their own dropped dews express The light of heaven on every earthly

hill.

It is not from the hills, though calm

and bare

They, since their first creation,

Through midnight cloud or morning's glittering air

Or the deep deluge blindness, toward the place
Whence thrilled the mystic word's

Whence thrilled the mystic word's creative grace,

And whence again shall come

The word that uncreates, Have lift their brows in voiceless

expectation.

It is not from the places that entomb

Man's dead—though common Silence

there dilates

Her soul to grand proportions,

Ier soul to grand proportions
worthily

To fill life's vacant room.

Not there—not there!

Not yet within their chambers lieth He,

A dead One in His living world! His south

And west winds blowing over earth and sea,

God! And not a breath on that creating movest Mouth!

But now,—a silence keeps (Not death's, nor sleep's)

The lips whose whispered word

Might roll the thunders round reverberated.

Silent art Thou, O my Lord, Bowing down Thy stricken head!

Fearest Thou, a groan of Thine Would make the pulse of Thy creation fail

As Thine own pulse?—would rend the veil

Of visible things, and let the flood Of the Unseen Light, the essential God,

Rush in to whelm the undivine?— Thy silence, to my thinking, is as dread!

Zerah. O silence!

Ador. Doth it say to thee—the NAME,

Slow-learning Seraph?

Zerah. I have learnt.

Ador. The flame

Perishes in thine eyes.

Zerah. He opened His—And looked. I cannot bear—

Ador. Their agony?

Perah. Their love. God's depth is in them. From His brows

White, terrible in meekness, didst thou see The lifted eyes unclose?

He is God, seraph! Look no more on me,

O God! I am not God.

Ador. The loving is Sublimed within them by the sorrowful.

In Heaven we could sustain them.

Zerah. Heaven is dull,

Mine Ador, to man's earth. The light that burns

In fluent, refluent motion Along the crystal ocean.—

The springing of the golden harps between

The bowery wings, in fountains of sweet sound—

The winding, wandering music that returns

Upon itself, exultingly self-bound In the great spheric round

Of everlasting praises

The God-thoughts in our midst that intervene,

Visibly flashing from the súpreme throne

Full in seraphic faces,

Till each astonishes the other, grown More beautiful with worship and delight!

My heaven! my home of heaven! my infinite

Heaven-choirs! what are ye to this dust and death,

This cloud, this cold, these tears, this failing breath,

Where God's immortal love now issueth

In this Man's woe?

Ador. His eyes are very deep yet calm—

Zerah. No more On me, Jehovah-man—

Ador. Calm-deep. They show A passion which is tranquil. They are seeing

No earth, no heaven: no men, that slay and curse,

No seraphs that adore. Their gaze is on the invisible, the

dread,
The things we cannot view or think
or speak,

Because we are too happy, or too weak.—

The sea of ill, for which the universe With all its piled space, can find no shore.

With all its life, no living foot to tread.

But He, accomplished in Jehovahbeing,

Sustains the gaze adown, Conceives the vast despair,

And feels the billowy griefs come up to drown,

Nor fears, nor faints, nor fails, till all be finished.

Zerah. Thus, do I find thee thus?

My undiminished

And undiminishable God!—My God!— The echoes are still tremulous along The heavenly mountains, of the latest song

Thy manifested glory swept abroad, In rushing past our lips! They echo

"Creator, Thou art strong!-

Creator, Thou art blessed over all,"
By what new utterance shall I now recall,

Unteaching the heaven-echoes?

Dare I say.

"Creator, Thou art feebler than Thy work!

Creator, Thou art sadder than Thy creature!

A worm, and not a man,— Yea, no worm—but a curse?"— I dare nqt, so, mine heavenly phrase

reverse.

Albeit the piercing thorn and thistlefork

(Whose seed disordered ran From Eve's hand, trembling when the curse did reach her)

Be garnered darklier in Thy soul! the rod
That smites Thee never blossoming.

—and Thou, Grief-bearer for Thy world, with

Grief-bearer for Thy world, with unkinged brow—

I leave to men their song of Ichabod! I have an angel-tongue—I know but praise.

Ador. Hereafter shall the bloodbought captives raise

The passion-song of blood.

Zerah. And we, extend Our holy vacant hands towards the Throne,

Crying, "We have no music!"

Ador. Rather, blend
Both musics into one!

The sanctities and sanctified above Shall each to each, with lifted looks serene,

Their shining faces lean, And mix the adoring breath'

And breathe the full thanksgiving.

Zerah.

But the love—
The love, mine Ador!

Ador. Do we love not?

Zerah. Yea,

But not as man shall! not with life

for death, New-throbbing through the startled

being! not
With strange astonished smiles, that
ever may

Gush passionate like tears and fill their place!

Nor yet with speechless memories of what

Earth's winters were, enverduring the green

Of every heavenly palm, Whose windless, shadeless

Whose windless, shadeless calm

Moves only at the breath of the Unseen.

Oh, not with this blood on us—and this face,—

Still, haply, pale with sorrow that it bore

In our behalf, and tender evermore With nature all our own, upon us gazing!—

Nor yet with these forgiving hands upraising

Their unreproachful wounds, alone to bless!

Alas, Creator! shall we love Thee less

Than mortals shall?

Ador. Amen! so let it be. We love in our proportion—to the bound

Thine infinite our finite set around, And that is finitely,—Thou, infinite And worthy infinite love! And our delight

Is watching the dear love poured out to Thee

From ever fuller chalice. Blessed they, Who love Thee more than we do! blessed we,

Viewing that love which shall exceed even this,

And winning in the sight, a double bliss.

For all so lost in love's supremacy!
The bliss is better! only on the sad
Cold earth there are who say

It seemeth better to be great than glad.

The bliss is better! Love Him more, O man.

Than sinless seraphs can.

Zerah. Yea, love Him more.

Voices of the angelic multitude. Yea,
more!

Ador. The loving word
Is caught by those from whom we stand apart:

For Silence hath no deepness in her

Where love's low name low breathed would not be heard

By angels, clear as thunder.

Angelic voices. Love Him more!
Ador. Sweet voices, swooning o'er
The music which ye make!
Albeit to love there were not

ever given

A mournful sound, when uttered out of heaven,

That angel-sadness, ye would fitly take.

Of love be silent now! we gaze adown

Upon the Incarnate Love Who wears no crown.

Zerah. No crown! the woe instead Is heavy on His head,

Pressing inward on His brain,

With a hot and clinging pain.

Till all tears are prest away, And clear and calm His vision may

Peruse the long abyss.
No rod, no sceptre is
Holden in His fingers pale:
They close instead upon the

They close instead upon the nail,

Concealing the sharp dole—

Never stirring to put by The fair hair peaked with blood,

Drooping forward from the rood

Helplessly, heavily,

On the cheek that waxeth colder,

Whiter ever,—and the shoulder

Where the government was laid.

His glory made the Heavens afraid— Will He not unearth this cross

from its hole? His pity makes His piteous

state:

Will He be uncompassionate Alone to His proper soul? Yea, will He not lift up His lips from the bitter cup, His brows from the dreary

weight, His hands from the clench-

ing cross
Crying, "My Father, give to
Me

Again the joy I had with Thee, Or ere this earth was made for loss "?—

No stir—no sound!

The love and woe being interwound

He cleaveth to the woe,
And putteth forth Heaven's
strength below—
To bear.

Ador. And that creates His anguish now,

Which made His glory there.

Zerah. Shall it indeed be so?

Awake, thou Earth! behold!

Thou, uttered forth of old

In all thy life-emotion,

In all thy vernal noises,

In the rollings of thine ocean,

Leaping founts, and rivers

running, In thy woods' prophetic heav-

ing

Ere the rains a stroke have given,

In thy wind's exultant voices When they feel the hills anear, In the firmamental sunning,

And the tempest which rejoices

Thy full heart with an awful cheer!

Thou! uttered forth of old And with all thy music rolled In a breath abroad

By the breathing God!

Awake! He is here! behold!—

Even thou—

beseems it good To thy vacant vision dim, That the deathly ruin should, For thy sake, encompass Him? That the Master-word should lie

A mere silence, while His own Processive harmony,

The faintest echo of His lightest tone

His lips from the bitter cup,
His brows from the dreary
weight,

Is sweeping in a choral triumph by?
Awake! emit a cry!
And say, albeit used

And say, albeit used
From Adam's ancient
years

To falls of acrid tears, To frequent sighs unloosed, Caught back to press again On bosoms zoned with pain-To corses still and sullen The shine and music dulling With closed eyes and ears That nothing sweet can enter, Commoving thee no less With that forced quietness, earthquakes in thy Than centre-

Thou hast not learnt to bear This new divine despair! These tears that sink into thee, These dying eyes that view thee,

This dropping blood from lifted rood.

They darken and undo thee! Thou canst not, presently, sustain this corse!

Cry, cry, thou hast not force! Cry, thou wouldst fainer keep Thy hopeless charnels deep-Thyself a general tomb-Where the first and the second Death

Sit gazing face to face And mar each other's breath, While silent bones through all the place,

'Neath sun and moon do faintly glisten,

And seem to lie and listen For the tramp of the coming Doom.

Is it not meet

That they who erst the Eden fruit did eat,

Should champ the ashes? That they who wrapt them in the thunder-cloud,

Should wear it as a shroud, Perishing by its flashes? That they who vexed the lion, should be rent?

Cry, cry-" I will sustain my punishment,

The sin being mine! but take away from me

visioned Dread—this This Man-this Deity."

The Earth. I have groaned—I have travailed-I am weary-I am blind with mine own grief, and cannot see,

As clear-eyed angels can, His agony,

And what I see I also can sustain. Because His power protects me from His pain.

I have groaned—I have travailed— I am dreary,

Harkening the thick sobs of my children's heart.

How can I say "Depart." To that Atoner making calm and free? Am I a God as He,

To lay down peace and power as willingly?

Ador. He looked for some to pity. There is none.

All pity is within Him, and not for Him.

His earth is iron under Him, and o'er Him

His skies are brass. His seraphs cry "Alas" With hallelujah voice that cannot weep.

And man, for whom the dreadfu

work is done-Scornful voices from the Earth. If verily this be the Eternal's Son-Ador. Thou hearest!—man is grateful!

Can I hear. Zerah. Nor darken into man, and cease for ever

My seraph-smile to wear? Was it for such,

It pleased Him to overleap His glory with His love, and sever

From the God-light and the throne

And all angels bowing down, For whom His every look did touch

New notes of joy on the unworn string

Of an eternal worshipping! He left His For such heaven?

There, though never bought by blood

And tears, we gave Him gratitude!

We loved Him there, though unforgiven! The light is riven

Above, around,

And downwardly in lurid fragments flung,

That catch the mountain-pinnacle and stream,

With momentary gleam,
Then perish in the water and the
ground!

River and waterfall, Forest and wilderness,

Mountain and city, are together wrung

Into one shape, and that is shapelessness—

The darkness stands for all.

Ador. The pathos hath the day
undone:

The death-look of His eyes
Hath overcome the sun,

And made it sicken in its narrow skies—

Is it to death? He dieth.

Zerah. Through the dark,

He still, He only, is discernible—

The naked hands and feet, transfixed stark,

The countenance of patient anguish white.

Do make themselves a light More dreadful than the glooms which round them dwell,

And therein do they shine.

Ador. God! Father-God!

Perpetual Radiance on the radiant throne!

Uplift the lids of inward Deity,
Flashing abroad

Thy burning Infinite!
Light up this dark, where there is nought to see,

Except the unimagined agony
Upon the sinless forehead of the
Son.

Zerah. God, tarry not! Behold, enow

Hath He wandered as a stranger, Groan'd as a victim. Thou,

Appear for Him, O Father! Appear for Him, Avenger! Appear for Him, just One and holy One.

For He is holy and just! At once the darkness and the evil, rather

To the ragged jaws of hungry chaos rake,

And hurl aback to ancient dust These mortals that make blasphemies With their made breath! this earth and skies

That only grow a little dim, Seeing their curse on Him! But Him, of all forsaken, Of creature and of brother, Never wilt Thou forsake!

Thy living and Thy loving cannot slacken

Their firm essential hold upon each other—

And well Thou dost remember how His part

Was still to lie upon Thy breast, and be

Partaker of the light that dwelt in Thee

Ere sun or seraph shone;
And how while silence trembled
round the throne.

Thou countedst by the beatings of His heart

The moments of Thine own etern-

ity! Awaken,

Oright Hand with the lightnings!
Again gather

His glory to Thy glory! What estranger—

What ill most strong in evil, can be thrust

Between the faithful Father and the Son?

Appear for Him, O Father! Appear for Him, Avenger! Appear for Him, just One and holy One!

For He is holy and just.

Ador. Thy face, upturned toward the throne, is dark—

Thou hast no answer, Zerah.

Zerah.

No reply,
O unforsaking Father?—

Ador. Hark!

Instead of downward voice, a cry
Is uttered from beneath!

Zerah. And by a sharper sound

than death,

Mine immortality is riven.

The heavy darkness which doth tent the sky,

Floats backward as by a sudden wind—

But I see no light behind!
But I feel the farthest stars are all
Stricken and shaken,

And I know a shadow sad and broad,

Doth fall—doth fall

On our vacant thrones in heaven. Voice from the Cross. My God, My God,

WHY HAST THOU ME FORSAKEN?

The Earth. Ah me, ah me, ah me!

the dreadful why!

My sin is on Thee, sinless One!

God-orphaned, for my burden on Thy head.

Dark sin! white innocence! endurance dread!

Be still, within your shrouds, my buried dead—

Nor work with this quick horror round mine heart!

Zerah. He hath forsaken Him!
—I perish—

Ador. Hold Upon His name! We perish not. Of old

His will—

Zerah. I seek His will. Seek, Seraphim!

My God, my God! where is it? Doth that curse,

Reverberate, spare us, seraph or universe?

He hath forsaken Him.

Ador. He cannot fail.

Angel voices. We faint—we droop Our love doth tremble like fear—

Voices of Fallen Angels, from the earth. Do we prevail?

Or are we lost?—Hath not the ill
we did
Peop heretofore our good?

Been heretofore our good?

Is it not ill, that One, all sinless, should

Hang heavy with all curses, on a cross?

Nathless, that cry!—with huddled faces hid

Within the empty graves which men did scoop

To hold more damnèd dead, we shudder through
What shall exalt us or undo,—
Our triumph, or—our loss.

Voice from the Cross. It is finished.

Zerah. Hark, again! Like a victor, speaks the SlainAngel Voices. Finished be the trembling vain!

Ador. Upward, like a well-loved Son,

Looketh He, the orphaned One— Angel Voices. Finished is the mystic pain!

Voices of Fallen Angels. His deathly forehead at the word, Gleameth like a serbal sword.

Angel Voices. Finished is the demon reign!

Ador. His breath, as living God, createth—

His breath, as dying man, completeth.

Angel Voices. Finished work His hands sustain!

The Earth. In mine ancient sepul-

Where my kings and prophets freeze,

Adam, dead four thousand years,

Unwakened by the universe's Everlasting moan
Ave his ghastly silence, mock-

ing— Unwakened by his children's

knocking
'Gainst his old sepulchral stone.

"Adam, Adam! all this curse is

Thine, and on us yet!"— Unwakened by the ceaseless tears

Wherewith they made his cerement wet—

"Adam, must thy curse remain?"—

Starts with sudden life, and hears Through the slow dripping of the caverned eaves,—

Angel Voices. Finished is his bane! Voice from the Cross. FATHER! MY SPIRIT TO THINE HANDS IS GIVEN!

Ador. Hear the wailing winds that be

By wings of unclean spirits made!

They, in that last look, surveyed

The love they lost in losing heaven,

neither

And passionately flee, With a desolate cry that

cleaves

they are lifting

like leaves;

And the earthquake and From mouth so used to sighs-so

the thunder, keeping

Neither under,

Roar and hurtle through the glooms,-

And a few pale stars are drifting

Past the Dark, to disappear, What time, from the splitting tombs

Gleamingly the Dead arise, Viewing, with their deathcalmed eves

The elemental strategies. To witness, Victory is the

Lord's !-Hear the wail o' the spirits!

Zerah. I hear alone the memory of His words.

THE EPILOGUE

My song is done!

My voice that long hath faltered. shall be still.

The mystic darkness drops from Calvary's hill,

Into the common light of this day's sun.

I see no more Thy cross, O holy Slain! I hear no more the horror and the coil Of the great world's turmoil Feeling Thy countenance too still,-

nor yell

Of demons sweeping past it to their prison.

The skies, that turned to darkness with Thy pain,

Make now a summer's day,-And on my changed ear, that Sabbath bell

Records how CHRIST IS RISEN.

And I-ah! what am I

To counterfeit, with faculty earthdarkened,

Seraphic brows of light

The natural storms—though | And seraph language never used nor harkened?

God's strong cedar-roots Ah me! what word that seraphs sav. could come

soon to lie

Sighless, because then breathless, in the tomb?

Bright ministers of God and grace! —of grace

Because of God!—whether ye bow adown

In your own heaven, before the living face

Of Him who died, and deathless wears the crown-

Or whether at this hour, ye haply are Anear, around me, hiding in the night Of this permitted ignorance, your light,

This feebleness to spare,—

Forgive me, that mine earthly heart should dare

Shape images of unincarnate spirits. And lay upon their burning lips a thought

Cold with the weeping which mine earth inherits!

And though ye find in such hoarse music wrought

To copy yours, a cadence all the while Of sin and sorrow-only pitying smile!-

Ye know to pity, well.

I too may haply smile another day. At the far recollection of this lav. When God may call me in your midst to dwell,

To hear your most sweet music's miracle

And see your wondrous faces. May

For His remembered sake, the Slain on rood,

Who rolled His earthly garment red in blood,

(Treading the wine-press) that the weak, like me.

Before His heavenly throne should walk in white.

OTHER POEMS

[1838]

THE POET'S VOW

——O be wiser thou,
Instructed that true knowledge leads to love.
—Wordsworth.

PART THE FIRST

SHOWING WHEREFORE THE VOW WAS MADE

1

Eve is a twofold mystery—
The stillness Earth doth keep,—
The motion wherewith human hearts
Do each to either leap,
As if all souls, between the poles,
Felt "Parting comes in sleep."

TI

The rowers lift their oars to view
Each other in the sea;
The landsmen watch the rocking boats,
In a pleasant company,
While up the hill go gladlier still
Dear friends by two and three.

TT

The peasant's wife hath looked without

Her cottage door and smiled, For there the peasant drops his spade To clasp his youngest child Which hath no speech, but its hands can reach

And stroke his forehead mild.

IV

A poet sate that eventide
Within his hall alone,
As silent as its ancient lords
In the coffined place of stone;
When the bat hath shrunk from the
praying monk—
And the praying monk is gone.

V

Nor wore the dead a stiller face Beneath the cerement's roll: His lips refusing out in words Their mystic thoughts to dole, His stedfast eye burnt inwardly, As burning out his sou! VI

You would not think that brow could e'er

Ungentle moods express:

Yet seemed it, in this troubled world,
Too calm for gentleness:
When the very star, that shines from

Shines trembling, ne'ertheless.

VI

It lacked—all need—the softening light

Which other brows supply:

We should conjoin the scathed trunks

Of our humanity,

That each leafless spray entwining may

Look softer 'gainst the sky.

VIII

None gazed within the poet's face—
The poet gazed in none:
He threw a lonely shadow straight
Before the moon and sun,
Affronting nature's heaven-dwelling
creatures,
With wrong to nature done.

τv

Because this poet daringly,
The nature at his heart,
And that quick tune along his veins
He could not change by art,
Had vowed his blood of brotherhood
To a stagnant place apart.

x

He did not vow in fear, or wrath,
Or grief's fantastic whim,—
But, weights and shows of sensual
things

Too closely crossing him,

On his soul's eyelid, the pressure slid And made its vision dim.

XI

And darkening in the dark he strove 'Twixt earth and sea and sky,
To lose in shadow wave and cloud,
His brother's haunting cry.

The winds were welcome as they

swept: God's five-day work he would accept,

But let the rest go by.

He cried-"Otouching, patient Earth, That weepest in thy glee ! Whom God created very good, And very mournful, we! Thy voice of moan doth reach His

throne.

As Abel's rose from thee.

" Poor crystal sky, with stars astray! Mad winds, that howling go From east to west! perplexèd seas, That stagger from their blow! O motion wild! O wave defiled! Our curse hath made you so.

XIV "We I and our curse! Do I partake

The desiccating sin? Have I the apple at my lips? The money-lust within?

Do I human stand with the wounding hand.

To the blasting heart akin?

"Thou solemn pathos of all things, For solemn joy designed!

Behold, submissive to your cause An holy wrath I find,

And, for your sake, the bondage break, That knits me to my kind.

"Hear me forswear man's sympathies, His pleasant 'yea' and 'no'-His riot on the piteous earth Whereon his thistles grow! His changing love—with stars above! His pride—with graves below!

"Hear me forswear his roof by night, His bread and salt by day, His talkings at the wood-fire hearth,

His greetings by the way. His answering looks, his systemed

books, All man, for aye and aye.

"That so my purged, once human

From all the human rent.

May gather stength to pledge and drink

Your wine of wonderment, While you pardon me, all blessingly, The woe mine Adam sent.

"And I shall feel your unseen looks Innumerous, constant, deep, And soft as haunted Adam once, Though sadder, round me creep,-

As slumbering men have mystic ken Of watchers on their sleep.

"And ever, when I lift my brow At evening to the sun, No voice of woman or of child Recording 'Day is done,' Your silences shall a love express, More deep than such an one!"

PART THE SECOND

SHOWING TO WHOM THE VOW WAS DECLARED

The poet's vow was inly sworn-The poet's vow was told. He shared among his crowding friends

The silver and the gold,-They clasping bland his gift,—his

hand,

In a somewhat slacker hold.

They wended forth, the crowding friends,

With farewells smooth and kind-They wended forth, the solaced friends.

And left but twain behind: One loved him true as brothers do. And one was Rosalind.

He said-" My friends have wended

With farewells smooth and kind. Mine oldest friend, my plighted bride, Ye need not stay behind.

Friend, wed my fair bride for my sake.—

And let my lands ancestral make A dower for Rosalind.

And when beside your wassail board Ye bless your social lot, I charge you that the giver be In all his gifts forgot!

Or alone of all his words recall The last,—'Lament me not'."

She looked upon him silently. With her large, doubting eyes, Like a child that never knew but love. Whom words of wrath surprise; Till the rose did break from either cheek

And the sudden tears did rise.

She looked upon him mournfully. While her large eyes were grown Yet larger with the steady tears. Till, all his purpose known, She turned slow, as she would

go-The tears were shaken down.-

She turnèd slow, as she would go, Then quickly turned again; And gazing in his face to seek Some little touch of pain-"I thought," she said,—but shook her head.— She tried that speech in vain.

"I thought—but I am half a child, And very sage art thou— The teachings of the heaven and earth Should keep us soft and low. They have drawn my tears, in early years. Or ere I wept—as now.

"But now that in thy face I read Their cruel homily, Before their beauty I would fain Untouched, unsoftened be,— If I indeed could look on even The senseless, loveless earth and heaven. As thou canst look on me.

"And couldest thou as coldly view Thy childhood's far abode, Where little feet kept time with thine Along the dewy sod?

And thy mother's look from holy book Rose, like a thought of God?

"O brother,—called so, ere her last Betrothing words were said! O fellow-watcher in her room, With hushed voice and tread!

Rememberest thou how, hand in hand.

O friend, O lover, we did stand, And knew that she was dead?

" I will not live Sir Roland's bride,-That dower I will not hold! I tread below my feet that go, These parchments bought and sold. The tears I weep, are mine to keep, And worthier than thy gold."

XIII

The poet and Sir Roland stood Alone, each turned to each: Till Roland brake the silence left By that soft-throbbing speech-"Poor heart!" he cried, "it vainly tried The distant heart to reach!

"And thou, O distant, sinful heart, That climbest up so high, To wrap and blind thee with the snows That cause to dream and die-What blessing can, from lips of man, Approach thee with his sigh?

"Ay! what, from earth—create for And moaning in his moan? Ay! what from stars—revealed to And man-named, one by one? Ay, more! what blessing can

given, Where the Spirits seven do show in Heaven

A Man upon the throne?—

"A man on earth HE wandered once, All meek and undefiled: And those who loved Him, said 'He wept '-

None ever said He smiled. Yet there might have been a smile unseen.

When He bowed His blessed face, I ween.

To bless that happy child.

XVII

" And now HE pleadeth up in Heaven For our humanities,

Till the ruddy light on seraphs' wings In pale emotion dies. They can better bear His Godhead's

glare.

Than the pathos of His eyes.

XVIII

"I will go pray our God to-day To teach thee how to scan His work divine, for human use Since earth on axle ran! To teach thee to discern as plain His grief divine—the blocd-drop's stain

He left there, Man for man.

"So, for the blood's sake, shed by Him,

Whom angels God declare, Tears, like it, moist and warm with love.

Thy reverent eyes shall wear, To see i' the face of Adam's race The nature God doth share."

"I heard," the poet said, "thy voice As dimly as thy breath! The sound was like the noise of life To one anear his death,-Or of waves that fail to stir the pale Sere leaf they roll beneath.

"And still between the sound and me White creatures like a mist Did interfloat confusedly.— Mysterious shapes unwist! Across my heart and across my brow I felt them droop like wreaths of snow. To still the pulse they kist.

"The castle and its lands are thine-The poor's—it shall be done. Go, man, to love! I go to live In Courland hall, alone. The bats along the ceilings cling,-The lizards in the floors do run,— And storms and years have worn and reft

The stain by human builders left In working at the stone!"

PART THE THIRD SHOWING HOW THE VOW WAS KEPT

HE dwelt alone, and, sun and moon, Were witness that he made

Rejection of his humanness Until they seemed to fade. His face did so; for he did grow Of his own soul afraid.

The self-poised God may dwell a'one With inward glorying, But God's chief angel waiteth for A brother's voice, to sing,-And a lonely creature of sinful nature— It is an awful thing.

An awful thing that feared itself While many years did roll,— A lonely man, a feeble man,— A part beneath the whole— He bore by day, he bore by night That pressure of God's infinite Upon his finite soul.

The poet at his lattice sate, And downwardly looked he: Three Christians wended by to pravers. With mute ones in their ee.

Each turned above a face of love. And called him to the far chapelle With voice more tuneful than its bell— But still they wended three.

There journeyed by a bridal pomp, A bridegroom and his dame: She speaketh low for happiness, She blusheth red for shame.— But never a tone of benison From out the lattice came.

A little child with inward song, No louder noise to dare, Stood near the wall to see at play The lizards green and rare— Unblessed the while for his childish smile Which cometh unaware.

PART THE FOURTH SHOWING HOW ROSALIND FARED BY THE KEEPING OF THE VOW

In death-sheets lieth Rosalind. As white and still as thev: And the old nurse that watched her bed.

Rose up with "Well-a-day!"

And oped the casement to let in The sun, and that sweet doubtful din Which droppeth from the grass and bough

Sans wind and bird—none knoweth how—

To cheer her as she lay.

II

The old nurse started when she saw Her sudden look of woe! But the quick wan tremblings round her mouth

In a meek smile did go, And calm she said, "When I am dead, Dear nurse, it shall be so.

TTT

"Till then, shut out those sights and sounds,

And pray God pardon me
That I without this pain, no more
His blessed works can see!
And lean beside me, loving nurse,
That thou mayst hear, ere I am worse,
What thy last love should be."

IV

The loving nurse leant over her,
As white she lay beneath;
The old eyes searching, dim with life,
The young ones dim with death,
To read their book if sound forsook
The trying, trembling breath.—

"When all this feeble breath is done, And I on bier am laid,

My tresses smoothed for never a feast, My body in shroud arrayed; Uplift each palm in a saintly calm, As if that still I prayed.

VI

"And heap beneath mine head the flowers

You stoop so low to pull,—
The little white flowers from the wood,
Which grow there in the cool;
Which he and I, in childhood's games,

Which he and I, in childhood's games, Went plucking, knowing not their names,

And filled thine apron full.

VII

"Weep not! I weep not. Death is strong,
The eyes of Death are dry!
B.P.

But lay this scroll upon my breast When hushed its heavings lie, And wait awhile for the corpse's smile Which shineth presently.

VIII

"And when it shineth, straightway call

Thy youngest children dear,
And bid them gently carry me
All barefaced on the bier—
But bid them pass my kirkyard grass
That waveth long anear.

IX

"And up the bank where I used to sit
And dream what life would be,
Along the brook, with its sunny look
Akin to living glee,—

O'er the windy hill, through the forest still,

Let them gently carry me.

x

"And through the piney forest still, And down the open moorland— Round where the sea beats mistily And blindly on the foreland— And let them chant that hymn I

Bearing me soft, bearing me slow, To the ancient hall of Courland.

X.

"And when withal they near the hall, In silence let them lay My bier before the bolted door, And leave it for a day: For I havevowed, though I am proud, To go there as a guest in shroud, And not be turned away."

77.71

The old nurse looked within her eyes,
Whose mutual look was gone;
The old nurse stooped upon her

mouth,

Whose answering voice was done; And naught she heard, till a little bird

Upon the casement's woodbine swinging,

Broke out into a loud sweet singing For joy o' the summer sun.

"Alack! alack!"—she watched no more—

With head on knee she wailed sore.

And the little bird sang o'er and o'er For joy o' the summer sun.

PART THE FIFTH

SHOWING HOW THE VOW WAS BROKEN

The poet oped his bolted door,
The midnight sky to view.
A spirit-feel was in the air
Which seemed to touch his spirit
bare

Whenever his breath he drew; And the stars a liquid softness had, As alone their holiness forbade Their falling with the dew.

They shine upon the steadfast hills, Upon the swinging tide, Upon the narrow track of beach, And the murmuring pebbles pied. They shine on every lovely place—They shine upon the corpse's face, As it were fair beside.

III

It lay before him, humanlike,
Yet so unlike a thing!
More awful in its shrouded pomp
Than any crownèd king.
All calm and cold, as it did hold
Some secret, glorying.

A heavier weight than of its clay

Clung to his heart and knee.
As if those folded palms could strike,
He staggered groaningly,
And then o'erhung, without a groan,
The meek close mouth that smiled

Whose speech the scroll must be.

THE WORDS OF ROSALIND'S SCROLL
"I LEFT thee last, a child at heart,
A woman scarce in years,

I come to thee, a solemn corpse, Which neither feels nor fears. I have no breath to use in sighs.

They laid the death-weights on mine eyes,

To seal them safe from tears.

"Look on me with thine own calm look-

I meet it calm as thou!

Nolook of thine can change this smile, Or break thy sinful yow.

I tell thee that my poor scorned heart
Is of thine earth . . . thine earth—
a part—

It cannot love thee now.

"But out, alas! these words are writ By a living, loving one, Adown whose cheeks, the proofs of

life.

The warm, quick tears do run.
Ah, let the unloving corpse controul
Thy scorn back from the loving soul,
Whose place of rest is won.

"I have prayed for thee with bitter sobs.

When passion's course was free!

I have prayed for thee with silent lips,

In the auguish none could see!
They whispered oft, 'She sleepeth soft'—

But I only prayed for thee.

"Go to! I pray for thee no more—
The corpse's tongue is still.
Its folded fingers point to heaven

Its folded fingers point to heaven, But point there stiff and chill. No farther wrong, no farther woe Hath licence from the sin below

Its tranquil heart to thrill.

"I charge thee, by the living's prayer, And the dead's silentness, To wring from out thy soul a cry

Which God shall hear and bless! Lest Heaven's own palm droop in my hand,

And pale among the saints I stand, A saint companionless."

v

Bow lower down before the throne, Triumphant Rosalind!

He boweth on thy corpse his face, And weepeth as the blind.

'Twas a dread sight to see them so— For the senseless corpse rocked to and fro,

With the wail of his living mind.

VI

But dreader sight, could such be seen, His inward mind did lie; Whose long-subjected humanness Gave out its lion cry,
And fiercely rent its tenement
In a mortal agony.

VII

I tell you, friends, had you heard his wail,

'Twould haunt you in court and mart,

And in merry feast, until you set
Your cup down to depart—
That weening wild of a reckless ch

That weeping wild of a reckless child From a proud man's broken heart!

VIII

O broken heart! O broken vow, That wore so proud a feature! God, grasping as a thunderbolt The man's rejected nature, Smote him therewith—i' the presence

high
Of his so worshipped earth and sky
That looked on all indifferently—
A walling human creature.

7.00

A human creature found too weak To bear his human pain— (May Heaven's dear grace have spoken peace

To his dying heart and brain!)
For when they came at dawn of day
To lift the lady's corpse away,
Her bier was holding twain.

X

They dug beneath the kirkyard grass, For both, one dwelling deep: And, after years had mossed the stone.

Sir Roland brought his little son
To watch the funeral heap.
And, when the happy boy would
rather

Turn upward his blithe eyes to see
The wood-doves nodding from the

"Nay, boy, look downward," said his father,

"Upon this human dust asleep.
And hold it in thy constant ken,
That God's own unity compresses
(One into one) the human many,

And that His everlastingness is

The bond which is not loosed by
any.

That thou and I this law must keep,

If not in love, in sorrow then! Though smiling not like other men, Still, like them, we must weep."

THE ROMAUNT OF MARGRET

Can my affections find out nothing best, But still and still remove?—

Quarles.

I PLANT a tree whose leaf
The yew-tree leaf will suit.
But when its shade is o'er you laid,
Turn round and pluck the fruit!

Turn round and pluck the fruit!
Now reach my harp from off the wall
Where shines the sun aslant:
The sun may shine and we be cold—

O hearken, loving hearts and bold, Unto my wild romaunt,

Margret, Margret.

II

Sitteth the fair ladye Close to the river side,

Which runneth on with a merry tone, Her merry thoughts to guide.

It runneth through the trees,
It runneth by the hill,
Nathless the lady's thoughts have

found
A way more pleasant still.
Margret, Margret.

III

The night is in her hair,
And giveth shade to shade,
And the pale moonlight on her forehead white
Like a spirit's hand is laid

Like a spirit's hand is laid. Her lips part with a smile, Instead of speakings done— I ween, she thinketh of a voice, Albeit uttering none. Margret, Margret.

7.57

All little birds do sit

With heads beneath their wings: Nature doth seem in a mystic dream, Absorbed from her living things.

That dream by that ladye
Is certes unpartook,

For she looketh to the high cold stars
With a tender human look.

Margret, Margret.

v

The lady's shadow lies Upon the running river:

It lieth no less in its quietness, For that which resteth never. Most like a trusting heart Upon a passing faith,— On as, upon the course of life, The steadfast doom of death. Margret, Margret.

The lady doth not move, The lady doth not dream,-Yet she seeth her shade no longer laid In rest upon the stream! It shaketh without wind, It parteth from the tide; It standeth upright in the cleft moonlight-

It sitteth at her side. Margret, Margret.

Look in its face, ladye, And keep thee from thy swound! With a spirit bold, thy pulses hold, And hear its voice's sound! For so will sound thy voice, When thy face is to the wall! And such will be thy face, ladve. When the maidens work thy pall-

Margret, Margret.

VIII

"Am I not like to thee?"— The voice was calm and low-And between each word you might have heard

The silent forests grow. "The like may sway the like! By which mysterious law. Mine eyes from thine and my lips from thine

The light and breath may draw. Margret, Margret.

"My lips do need thy breath. My lips do need thy smile, And my pale deep eyne, that light in thine

Which met the stars erewhile. Yet go with light and life, If that thou lovest one In all the earth, who loveth thee As truly as the sun,

Margret, Margret."

Her cheek had waxed white, Like cloud at fall of snow; Then like to one at set of sun, It waxèd red alsò;

For love's name maketh bold, As if the loved were near! And then she sighed the deep long sigh Which cometh after fear. Margret, Margret.

"Now, sooth, I fear thee not— Shall never fear thee now!" (And a noble sight was the sudden light

Which lit her lifted brow.) "Can earth be dry of streams; Or hearts, of love?" she said-"Who doubteth love, can know not love:

> He is already dead." Margret, Margret.

XII

"I have" . . . and here her lips Some word in pause did keep, And gave the while a quiet smile, As if they paused in sleep,— "I have . . . a brother dear,

A knight of knightly fame! I broidered him a knightly scarf With letters of my name. Margret, Margret.

XIII

"I fed his grey goe hawk, I kissed his fierce bloodhound. I sate at home when he might come And caught his horn's far sound: I sang him hunter's songs,

I poured him the red wine— He looked across the cup, and said, 'I love thee, sister mine.' "

Margret, Margret.

It trembled on the grass,

With a low, shadowy laughter. The sounding river which rolled for ever,

Stood dumb and stagnant after. "Brave knight thy brother is! But better loveth he Thy chaliced wine than thy chanted

song, And better both, than thee,

Margret, Margret."

The lady did not heed The river's silence, while Her own thoughts still ran at their will.

And calm was still her smile. "Mv little sister wears The look our mother wore: I smooth her locks with a golden

> comb-I bless her evermore.

Margret, Margret.

"I gave her my first bird, When first my voice it knew; I made her share my posies rare, And told her where they grew: I taught her God's dear name With prayer and praise, to tell— She looked from heaven into my face, And said, 'I love thee well'." Margret, Margret.

XVII

IT trembled on the grass, With a low, shadowy laughter: You could see each bird as it woke and stared

Through the shrivelled foliage after. "Fair child thy sister is! But better loveth she

Thy golden comb than thy gathered flowers-

And better both, than thee, Margret, Margret."

The lady did not heed The withering on the bough: Still calm her smile, albeit the while A little pale her brow.

"I have a father old, The lord of ancient halls: An hundred friends are in his court, Yet only me he calls. Margret, Margret.

"An hundred knights are in his court,

Yet read I by his knee: And when forth they go to the tourney show, I rise not up to see.

'Tis a weary book to read-My tryst's at set of sunBut loving and dear beneath the stars Is his blessing when I've done." Margret, Margret.

It trembled on the grass, With a low, shadowy laughter. And moon and star though bright and

Did shrink and darken after. "High lord thy father is! But better loveth he

His ancient halls than his hundred friends.-

His ancient halls, than thee. Margret, Margret."

The lady did not heed That the far stars did fail: Still calm her smile, albeit the while ... Nay, but she is not pale! "I have a more than friend Across the mountains dim: No other's voice is soft to me. Unless it nameth him."

XXII

Margret, Margret.

"Though louder beats mine heart. I know his tread again-And his far plume aye, unless turned awav. For the tears do blind me then. We brake no gold, a sign

Of stronger faith to be ;-But I wear his last look in my soul, Which said, 'I love but thee !'" Margret, Margret.

IT trembled on the grass, With a low, shadowy laughter. And the wind did toll, as a passing soul Were sped by church-bell, after : And shadows, stead of light, Fell from the stars above, In flakes of darkness on her face Still bright with trusting love. . Margret, Margret.

XXIV

" He loved but only thee! That love is transient too. The wild hawk's bill doth dabble still I' the mouth that vowed thee true. Will he open his dull eyes, When tears fall on his brow?

Behold, the death-worm to his heart Is a nearer thing than thou, Margret, Margret."

XXV

Her face was on the ground—
None saw the agony!
But the men at sea did that night agree
They heard a drowning cry.
And when the morning brake,
Fast rolled the river's tide,
With the green trees waving overhead,
And a white corse laid beside.
Margret, Margret.

XXVI

A knight's bloodhound and he
The funeral watch did keep.
With a thought o' the chase he
stroked its face
As it howled to see him weep.
A fair child kissed the dead,
But shrank before the cold.
And alone yet proudly in his hall
Did stand a baron old.
Margret, Margret.

XXVII

Hang up my harp again—
I have no voice for song.
Not song but wail, and mourners pale
Not bards, to love belong.
O failing human love!
O light, by darkness known!
O false, the while thou treadest earth!
O deaf, beneath the stone!
Margret, Margret.

ISOBEL'S CHILD

——so find we profit, By losing of our prayers. —Shakespeare.

To rest the weary nurse has gone, An eight-day watch had watchèd she,

Still rocking beneath sun and moon The baby on her knee; Till Isobel its mother said "The fever wareth—wend to had

"The fever waneth—wend to bed— For now the watch comes round to me."

Then wearily the nurse did throw
Her pallet in the darkest place
Of that sick room, and slept, and
dreamed.

For, as the gusty wind did blow The night-lamp's flare across her face,

She saw, or seemed to see, but dreamed,

That the poplars tall on the opposite hill,

The seven tall poplars on the hill,

Did clasp the setting sun until His rays dropped from him, pined

and still
As blossoms in frost!

Till he waned and paled, so weirdly crossed,

To the colour of moonlight which doth pass

Over the dank ridged churchyard grass.

The poplars held the sun, and he The eyes of the nurse, that they should not see,

Not for a moment, the babe on her knee,

Though she shuddered to feel that it grew to be
Too chill, and lay too heavily.

TTT

She only dreamed: for all the while 'Twas Lady Isobel that kept
The little baby,—and it slept
Fast, warm, as if its mother's smile,
Laden with love's dewy weight,
And red as a rose of Harpocrate,
Dropt upon its eyelids, pressed
Lashes to cheek in a sealed rest.

τV

And more and more smiled Isobel
To see the baby sleep so well—
She knew not that she smiled.
Against the lattice, dull and wild,
Drive the heavy droning drops,
Drop by drop, the sound being
one—

As momently time's segments fall On the ear of God, Who hears through all

Eternity's unbroken monotone.
And more and more smiled Isobel
To see the baby sleep so well—
She knew not that she smiled.

The wind in intermission stops Down in the beechen forest,

Then cries aloud As one at the sorest, Self-stung, self-driven, And rises up to its very tops, Stiffening erect the branches bowed,—

Dilating with a tempest-soul
The trees that with their dark
hands break

Through their own outline and heavily roll

Shadows as massive as clouds in heaven,

Across the castle lake.

And more and more smiled Isobel
To see the baby sleep so well;
She knew not that she smiled—
She knew not that the storm was
wild

Through the uproar drear she could not hear

The castle clock which struck anear— She heard the low, light breathing of her child.

v

O sight for wondering look!
While the external nature broke
Into such abandonment,—
While the very mist heart-rent
By the lightning, seemed to eddy
Against nature, with a din—
A sense of silence and of steady
Natural calm appeared to come
From things without, and enter in
The human creature's room.

VI

So motionless she sate,
The babe asleep upon her knees,
You might have dreamed their
souls had gone
Away to things inanimate,
In such to live, in such to moan;
And that their bodies had ta'en back,
In mystic, change, all silences
That cross the sky in cloudy rack,
Or dwell beneath the reedy ground

Only she wore
The deepening smile I named before,
And that a deepening love expressed—
And who at once can love and rest?

In waters safe from their own sound.

VI

In sooth the smile that then was keeping Watch upon the baby sleeping, Floated with its tender light

Downward, from the drooping eyes, Upward, from the lips apart, Over cheeks which had grown white

With an eight-day weeping.
All smiles come in such a wise,
Where tears shall fall, or have of old—
Like northern lights that fill the
heart

Of heaven in sign of cold.

VIII

Motionless she sate:
Her hair had fallen by its weight
On each side of her smile, and lay
Very blackly on the arm
Where the baby nestled warm,—
Pale as baby carved in stone
Seen by glimpses of the moon
Up a dark cathedral aisle!
But, through the storm, no moonbeam
fell
Upon the child of Isobel—
Perhaps you saw it by the ray

тx

Alone of her still smile.

A solemn thing it is to me
To look upon a babe that sleeps—
Wearing in its spirit-deeps
The undeveloped mystery
Of our Adam's taint and woe,
Which, when they revealed be,
Will not let it slumber so!
Lying new in life beneath
The shadow of the coming death,
With that soft, low, quiet breath,
As if it felt the sun!

As if it felt the sun!

Knowing all things by their blooms,

Not their roots, yea,—sun and sky,
Only by the warmth that comes
Out of each,—earth, only by
The pleasant hues that o'er it run,—
And human love, by drops of sweet
White nourishment still hanging
round

The little mouth so slumber-bound. All which broken sentiency And conclusion incomplete, Will gather and unite and climb To an immortality Good or evil, each sublime, Through life and death to life again! O little lids, now folded fast, Must ye learn to drop at last Our large and burning tears?

O warm quick body, must thou lie, When the time comes round to die, Still, from all the whirl of years, Bare of all the joy and pain?— O small frail being, wilt thou stand At God's right hand,-

Lifting up those sleeping eyes, Dilated by sublimest destinies, To an endless waking? Thrones and seraphim,

Through the long ranks of their

solemnities, Sunning thee with calm looks of Heaven's surprise-

Thy look alone on Him?-Or else, self-willed to tread the Godless place,

(God keep thy will!) feel thine own energies,

Cold, strong, objectless, like a dead man's clasp,

The sleepless deathless life within thee, grasp,-

While myriad faces, like one changeless face,

With woe not love's, shall glass thee everywhere.

And overcome thee with thine own despair?

More soft, less solemn images Drifted o'er the lady's heart. Silently as snow.

She had seen eight days depart Hour by hour, on bended knees, With pale-wrung hands and prayings low

And broken-through which came the sound

Of tears that fell against the ground, Making sad stops :- "Dear Lord, dear Lord!"

She still had prayed—(the heavenly word,

Broken by an earthly sigh)-"Thou, Who didst not erst deny The mother-joy to Mary mild, Blessed in the Blessed Child. Which hearkened in meek babyhood Her cradle-hymn, albeit used To all that music interfused In breasts of angels high and good! Oh, take not, Lord, my babe away- Now soft and slow, itself, did seem Oh, take not to Thy songful heaven, To float along a happy dream,

Or ere that I have seen him play Around his father's knees, and known That he knew how my love has gone

From all the world to him. Think, God among the cherubim, How I shall shiver every day In Thy June sunshine, knowing where The grave-grass keeps it from his fair

Still cheeks [and feel at every tread His little body which is dead And hidden in the turfy fold. Doth make the whole warm earth

a-cold!

O God, I am so young, so young-I am not used to tears at nights Instead of slumber—nor to prayer With shaken lips and hands outwrung!

Thou knowest all my prayings were, 'I bless Thee,God,for past delights— Thank God!' I am not used to bear Hard thoughts of death. The earth doth cover

No face from me of friend or lover: And must the first who teaches me The form of shrouds and funerals, be Mine own first-born beloved? he Who taught me first this mother-

love ?

Dear Lord, Who spreadest out above Thy loving, transpierced hands to

All lifted hearts with blessing sweet,— Pierce not my heart, my tender heart,

Thou madest tender! Thou who art So happy in Thy heaven alway, Take not mine only bliss away!"

She so had prayed: and God, Who

Through seraph-songs the sound of tears.

From that beloved babe had ta'en The fever and the beating pain. And more and more smiled Isobel To see the baby sleep so well-

She knew not that she smiled I wis Until the pleasant gradual thought Which near her heart, the smile, enwrought,

The pretty baby Thou hast given, Beyond it, into speech like this-

XII

"I prayed for thee, my little child, And God has heard my prayer! And when thy babyhood is gone, We two together undefiled By men's repinings, will kneel down Upon His earth, which will be fair (Not covering thee, sweet!) to us twain,

And give Him thankful praise."

XII

Dully and wildly drives the rain: Against the lattices drives the rain.

XIV

"I thank Him now, that I can think
Of those same future days,
Nor from the harmless image shrink
Of what I there might see—
Strange babies on their mothers' knee,
Whose innocent soft faces might
From off mine eyelids strike the light,
With looks not meant for me!"

3237

Gustily blows the wind through the rain,
As against the lattices drives the rain.

xv

"But now, O baby mine, together, We turn this hope of ours again To many an hour of summer weather When we shall sit and intertwine Our spirits, and instruct each other In the pure loves of child and mother!—

Two human loves make one divine."

XVII

The thunder tears through the wind and the rain,
As full on the lattices drives the

rain.

XVIII

"My little child, what wilt thou choose?

Let me look at thee and ponder.

What gladness, from the gladnesses Futurity is spreading under Thy gladsome sight? Beneath the trees.

Wilt thou lean all day, and lose Thy spirit with the river seen Intermittently between The winding beechen alleys?
Half in labour, half repose,
Like a shepherd keeping sheep,
Thou, with only thoughts to keep
Which never a bound will overpass,
And which are innocent as those
That feed among Arcadian valleys
Upon the dewy grass?"

XIX

The large white owl that with age is blind,
That hath sate for years in the old

tree hollow,

Is carried away in a gust of wind! His wings could bear him not as fast As he goeth now the lattice past— He is borne by the winds; the rains do follow:

His white wings to the blast outflowing,

He hooteth in going,
And still in the lightnings, coldly
glitter

His round unblinking eyes.

"Or, baby, wilt thou think it fitter To be eloquent and wise? One upon whose lips the air Turns to solemn verities, For men to breathe anew, and win A deeper-seated life within? Wilt be a philosopher, By whose voice the earth and skies Shall speak to the unborn? Or a poet, broadly spreading The golden immortalities Of thy soul on natures lorn And poor of such, them all to guard From their decay? beneath thy treading, Earth's flowers recovering hues of Eden? And stars, drawn downward by thy looks

To shine ascendant in thy books?"

The tame hawk in the castle-yard,
How it screams to the lightning, with
its wet
Jagged plumes overhanging the
parapet!
And at the lady's door the hound

And at the lady's door the hound Scratches with a crying sound !

XXII

"But, O my babe, thy lids are laid Close, fast upon thy cheek .-And not a dream of power and sheen Can make a passage up between! Thy heart is of thy mother's mac'e, Thy looks are very meek!

And it will be their chosen place To rest on some beloved face, As these on thine-and let the noise Of the whole world go on, nor drown

The tender silence of thy joys. Or when that silence shall have grown Too tender for itself, the same Yearning for sound,—to look above, And utter its one meaning, Love, That He may hear His name!"

XXIII

No wind—no rain—no thunder! The waters had trickled not slowly. The thunder was not spent Nor the wind near finishing.

Who would have said that the storm was diminishing?

No wind—no rain—no thunder! Their noises dropped asunder From the earth and the firmament. From the towers and the lattices, Abrupt and echoless,

As ripe fruits on the ground, unshaken wholly-

As life in death!

And sudden and solemn the silence fell.

Startling the heart of Isobel, As the tempest could not!

Against the door went panting the breath

Of the lady's hound whose cry was

And she, constrained howe'er she would not,

Lifted her eyes, and saw the moon Looking out of heaven alone Upon the poplared hill,—

A calm of God, made visible, That men might bless it at their will.

XXIV

The moonshine on the baby's face Falleth clear and cold. The mother's looks have fallen back To the same place: Because no moon with silver rack,

Nor broad sunrise in jasper skies. Have power to hold Our loving eyes, Which still revert, as ever must Wonder and Hope, to gaze on the dust.

XXV

The moonshine on the baby's face Cold and clear remaineth! The mother's looks do shrink away.— The mother's looks return to stav.

As charmed by what paineth. Is any glamour in the case? Is it dream or is it sight? Hath the change upon the wild Elements, that signs the night, Passed upon the child?

It is not dream, but sight!—

XXVI

The babe has awakened from sleep, And unto the gaze of its mother. Bent over it, lifted another! Not the baby-looks that go Unaimingly to and fro. But an earnest gazing deep, Such as soul gives soul at length, When, by work and wail of years, It winneth a solemn strength, And mourneth as it wears!

A strong man could not brook With pulse unhurried by fears, To meet that baby's look O'erglazed by manhood's tears-The tears of the man full grown, With the power to wring our own, In the eyes all undefiled Of a little three-months' child! To see that babe-brow wrought By the witnessing of thought, To judgment's prodigy! And the small soft mouth unweaned,

By mother's kiss o'erleaned (Putting the sound of loving Where no sound else was moving Except the speechless cry) Quickened to mind's expression,

Shaped to articulation, Yea, speaking words-yea, naming woe,

In tones that with it strangely went, Because so baby-innocent,

As the child spake out to the mother

so !--

XXVII

"O mother, mother, loose thy prayer! Christ's name hath made it strong! It bindeth me, it holdeth me With its most loving cruelty, From floating my new soul along

The happy heavenly air!
It bindeth me, it holdeth me
In all this dark, upon this dull
Low earth, by only weepers trod!—
It bindeth me, it holdeth me!—
Mine angel, looketh sorrowful
Upon the face of God.¹

XXVIII

"Mother, mother! can I dream
Beneath your earthly trees?
I had a vision and a gleam—
I heard a sound more sweet than these

When rippled by the wind. Did you see the Dove, with wings Bathed in golden glisterings From a sunless light behind, Dropping on me from the sky, Soft as mother's kiss, until I seemed to leap, and yet was still? Saw you how His love-large eye Looked upon me mystic calms, Till the power of His divine Vision was indrawn to mine?

XXIX

"Oh, the dream within the dream! I saw celestial places even. Oh, the vistas of high palms, Making finites of delight Through the heavenly infinite—Lifting up their green still tops.

To the heaven of Heaven | Oh, the sweet life-tree that drops Shade like light across the river Glorified in its for ever

Flowing from the Throne!
Oh, the shining holinesses
Of the thousand, thousand faces
God-sunned by the throned One!
And made intense with such a love,
That though I saw them turned
above,

Each loving seemed for also me! And, oh, the Unspeakable! the HE,— The manifest in secrecies, Yet of mine own heart partaker!

With the overcoming look
Of One Who hath been once forsook,

And blesseth the forsaker.

Mother, mother, let me go
Toward the Face that looketh so.
Through the mystic, wingèd Four,
Whose are inward, outward eyes
Dark with light of mysteries,
And the restless evermore
'Holy, holy, holy,'—through
The sevenfold Lamps that burn in

view
Of cherubim and seraphim,—
Through the four-and-twenty crowned
Stately elders, white around,—

XXX

Suffer me to go to Him!

"Is your wisdom very wise. Mother, on the narrow earth? Very happy, very worth That I should stay to learn? Are these air-corrupting sighs Fashioned by unlearned breath? Do the students' lamps that burn All night, illumine death? Mother, albeit this be so, Loose thy prayer, and let me go Where that bright chief angel stands Apart from all his brother bands, Too glad for smiling! having bent In angelic wilderment O'er the depths of God, and brought Reeling, thence, one only thought To fill his whole eternity. He the teacher is for me !-He can teach what I would know-Mother, mother, let me go !-

XXXI

"Can your poet make an Eden No winter will undo? And light a starry fire while heeding His hearth's is burning too? Drown in music the earth's din?—

Drown in music the earth's din?—And keep his own wild soul within The law of his own harmony?—

Mother! albeit this be so, Let me to my Heaven go! A little harp me waits thereby— A harp whose strings are golden all, And tuned to music spherical, Hanging on the green life-tree, Where no willows ever be. Shall I miss that harp of mine? Mother, no!—the Eye divine

^{1 &}quot;For I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven."—Matt. xviii. 10.

Turned upon it, makes it shine—And when I touch it, poems sweet Like separate souls shall fly from it, Each to an immortal fytte. We shall all be poets there, Gazing on the chiefest Fair!

· XXXII

"Love! earth's love! and can we love

Fixedly where all things move?
Can the sinning love each other?

Mother, mother,
I tremble in thy close embrace—
I feel thy tears adown my face—
Thy prayers do keep me out of bliss—

O dreary earthly love!
Loose thy prayer, and let me go
To the place which loving is,
Yet not sad! and, when is given
Escape to thee from this below,
Thou shalt behold me that I wait
For thee beside the happy Gate,
And silence shall be up in Heaven
To hear our greeting kiss."

IIIXXX

The nurse awakes in the morning sun, And starts to see beside her bed The lady, with a grandeur spread Like pathos, o'er her face,—as one God-satisfied and earth-undone.—

The babe upon her arm was dead!
And the nurse could utter forth no

She was awed by the calm in the mother's eye.

XXXIV

"Wake, nurse!"—the lady said:
"We are waking—he and I—
I, on earth, and he, in sky!
And thou must help me to o'erlay
With garment white, this little clay
Which needs no more our lullaby.

XXXV

"I changed the cruel prayer I made, And bowed my meekened face, and prayed.

That God would do His will! and thus

He did it nurse! He parted us.

And His sun shows victorious

The dead calm face,—and I am
calm:

And Heaven is hearkening a new psalm.

XXXVI

"This earthly noise is too anear, Too loud, and will not let me hear The little harp. My death will soon Make silence."

And a sense of tune, A satisfied love, meanwhile, Which nothing earthly could despoil, Sang on within her soul.

XXXVII

Oh you,
Earth's tender and impassioned few,
Take courage to entrust your love
To Him so Named, Who guards above
Its ends and shall fulfil!

Breaking the narrow prayers that

Befit your narrow hearts, away In His broad, loving will.

A ROMANCE OF THE GANGES

1

SEVEN maidens 'neath the midnight Stand near the river-sea,

Whose water sweepeth white around The shadow of the tree.

The moon and earth are face to face,
And earth is slumbering deep;
The wave-voice seems the voice of
dreams

That wander through her sleep.

The river floweth on.

TT

What bring they 'neath the midnight, Beside the river-sea?

They bring that human heart, wherein

No nightly calm can be,—
That droppeth never with the wind,
Nor drieth with the dew:—
Oh, calm it, God! Thy calm is

broad
To cover spirits, too.
The river floweth on.

III

The maidens lean them over
The waters, side by side,
And shun each other's deepening eyes,
And gaze adown the tide:

For each within a little boat A little lamp hath put. And heaped for freight some lily's weight

Or scarlet rose half shut. The river floweth on.

Of a shell of cocoa carven, Each little boat is made: Each carries a lamp, and carries a flower,

And carries a hope unsaid. And when the boat hath carried the lamp

Unquenched, till out of sight, The maidens are sure that love will endure,-

But love will fail with light. The river floweth on.

Why, all the stars are ready To symbolise the soul, The stars, untroubled by the wind. Unwearied as they roll: And yet the soul by instinct sad Reverts to symbols low-To that small flame, whose very name Breathed o'er it. shakes it so! The river floweth on.

Six boats are on the river, Seven maidens on the shore, While still above them steadfastly The stars shine evermore Go, little boats, go soft and safe, And guard the symbol spark!-The boats aright go safe and bright Across the waters dark. The river floweth on.

The maiden Luti watcheth Where onwardly they float. That look in her dilating eyes *Might seem to drive her boat; Her eyes still mark the constant fire,

And kindling unawares That hopeful while she lets a smile Creep silent through her prayers. The river floweth on.

The smile—where hath it wandered? She riseth from her knee,

She holds her dark, wet locks away-There is no light to see! She cries a quick and bitter cry-" Nuleeni, launch me thine! We must have light abroad to-night, For all the wreck of mine." The river floweth on.

IX

"I do remember watching Beside this river-bed. When on my childish knee was laid My dying father's head. I turned mine own, to keep the tears From falling on his face— What doth it prove, when Death and Love

Choose out the self-same place?" The river floweth on.

"They say the dead are joyful, The death-change here receiving. Who say—ah, me!—who dare to say Where joy comes to the living? Thy boat, Nuleeni! look not sad— Light up the waters rather! I weep no faithless lover where I wept a loving father." The river floweth on.

"My heart foretold his falsehood

Ere my little boat grew dim: And though I closed mine eyes to dream That one last dream of him, They shall not now be wet to see The shining vision go: From earth's cold love, I look above To the holy house of snow."1

XII

The river floweth on.

"Come thou—thou never knewest A grief, that thou shouldst fear one; Thou wearest still the happy look That shines beneath a dear one! Thy humming-bird is in the sun, 2

1 The Hindoo heaven is localised on the summit of Mount Meru—one of the mountains of Himalaya or Himmeleh, which signifies, I believe, in Sansorit, "the abode of snow," "winter," or "coldness."

2 Hamadeva, the Indian god of love, is imagined to wander through the three worlds, accompanied by the humming-bird, cuckoo, and wentle broczes.

and gentle breezes.

Thy cuckoo in the grove;
And all the three broad worlds, for
thee

Are full of wandering love."

The river floweth on.

XIII

"Why, maiden, dost thou loiter? What secret wouldst thou cover? That peepul cannot hide thy boat, And I can guess thy lover: I heard thee sob his name in sleep... It was a name I knew—Come, little maid, be not afraid—But let us prove him true!"

The river floweth on.

XIV

The little maiden cometh—
She cometh shy and slow;
I ween she seeth through her lids,
They drop adown so low:
Her tresses meet her small bare feet—
She stands and speaketh nought,
Yet blusheth red, as if she said
The name she only thought.
The river floweth on.

ΧV

She knelt beside the water,
She lighted up the flame,
And o'er her youthful forehead's calm
The fitful radiance came:—
"Go, little boat; go, soft and safe,
And guard the symbol spark!"
Soft, safe, doth float the little boat
Across the waters dark.
The river floweth on.

KVI

Glad tears her eyes have blinded;
The light they cannot reach:
She turneth with that sudden smile
She learnt before her speech—
"I do not hear his voice! the tears
Have dimmed my light away!
But the symbol light will last tonight—
The love will last for aye."
The river floweth on.

XVII

Then Luti spake behind her— Outspake she bitterly: "By the symbol light that lasts tonight, Wilt vow a vow to me?"—

Nuleeni gazeth up her face— Soft answer maketh she:

'By loves that last when lights are past,
I yow that yow to thee!"

[vow that vow to thee!"

The river floweth on.

XVIII

An earthly look had Luti,
Though her voice was deep as
prayer—

"The rice is gathered from the plains To cast upon thine hair! 1 But when he comes, his marriage-band

Around thy neck to throw,
Thy bride-smile raise to meet his gaze,
And whisper,—'There is one betrays,
When Luti suffers woe.'''

The river floweth on.

xix

"And when in seasons after,
Thy little bright-faced son
Shall lean against thy knee, and ask
What deeds his sire hath done,
Press deeper down thy mother-smile
His glossy curls among—

His glossy curls among— View deep his pretty childish eyes, And whisper,—'There is none denies, When Luti speaks of wrong.'"

The river floweth on.

XX

Nuleeni looked in wonder,
Yet softly answered she—
"By loves that last when lights are
past,

I vowed that vow to thee. But why glads it thee that a bride-

day be
By a word of woe defiled?

That a word of wrong take the cradle-

From the ear of a sinless child?"—
"Why;" Luti said, and her laugh
was dread,

And her eyes dilated wild—
"That the fair new love may her bridegroom prove,

And the father shame the child."

The river floweth on.

1 The casting of rice upon the head, and the fixing of the band or tall about the neck, are parts of the Hindoo marriage ceremonial.

XXI

"Thou flowest still, O river,
Thou flowest 'neath the moon—
Thy lily hath not changed a leaf,¹
Thy charmèd lute a tune!

Hemixed his voice with thine—and his
Was all I heard around;

But now, beside his chosen bride, I hear the river's sound."

The river floweth on.

XXII

"I gaze upon her beauty,
Through the tresses that enwreathe
it:
The light above thy wave, is hers—

The light above thy wave, is hers—
My rest, alone beneath it.
Oh give me back the dying look
My father gave thy water!
Give back!—and let a little love
O'erwatch his weary daughter!''
The river floweth on.

XXIII

"Give back!" she hath departed— The word is wandering with her, And the stricken maidens hear afar The step and cry together. Frail symbols? None are frail enow For mortal joys to borrow!— While bright doth float Nuleeni's boat, She weepeth, dark with sorrow. The river floweth on.

AN ISLAND

"All goeth but Goddis will."—Old Poet.

1

My dream is of an island place Which distant seas keep lonely; A little island, on whose face The stars are watchers only. Those bright still stars! they need not seem Brighter or stiller in my dream,

11

An island full of hills and dells, All rumpled and uneven With green recesses, sudden swells, And odorous valleys driven So deep and straight that always there

The wind is cradled to soft air.

1 The Ganges is represented as a white woman, with a water lily in her right hand, and in her left a lute.

III

Hills running up to heaven for light Through woods that half-way ran! As if the wild earth mimicked right The wilder heart of man; Only it shall be greener far

And gladder than hearts ever are.

IV

More like, perhaps, that mountain piece
Of Dante's paradise
Disrupt to an hundred hills like these,
In falling from the skies—
Bringing within it, all the roots
Of heavenly trees, and flowers and

v

fruits:

For saving where the grey rocks strike

Their javelins up the azure,

Or where deep fissures, miser-like,
Hoard up some fountain treasure,—
(And e'en in them—stoop down and
hear—

Leaf sounds with water in your ear!)

VI

The place is all awave with trees— Limes, myrtles purple-beaded, Acacias having drunk the lees Of the night-dew, faint-headed; And wan, grey olive-woods which seem The fittest foliage for a dream,

VI

Trees, trees on all sides! they combine
Their plumy shades to throw,

Their plumy shades to throw, Through whose clear fruit and blossom fine

Whene'er the sun may go, The ground beneath he deeply stains, As passing through cathedral panes.

VIII

But little needs this earth of ours
That shining from above her,
When many Pleiades of flowers
(Not one lost) star her over;
The rays of their unnumbered hues
Being all refracted by the dews.

IX

Wide-petalled plants that boldly drink
The Amreeta of the sky,

Shut bells, that, dull with rapture, sink, And lolling buds, half shy; I cannot count them, but between, Is room for grass and mosses green,

x

And brooks, that glass in different strengths
All colours in disorder,
Or gathering up their silver lengths
Raids their winding border.

Beside their winding border Sleep, haunted through the slumber hidden

By lilies white as dreams in Eden.

ΧI

Nor think each archèd tree with each Too closely interlaces To admit of vistas out of reach, And broad moon-lighted places

Upon whose sward the antiered deer May view their double image clear.

XII

For all this island's creature-full, Kept happy not by halves; Wild cows, that at the vine-wreaths pull.

Then low back at their calves With tender lowings, to approve The warm mouths milking them for love.

XIII

Free gamesome horses, antelopes, And harmless leaping leopards, And buffaloes upon the slopes, And sheep unruled by shepherds;

Hares, lizards, hedgehogs, badgers, mice, Snakes, squirrels, frogs, and butter-

YTV

And birds that live there in a crowd—
Horned owls, rapt nightingales,
Larks bold with heaven, and peacocks

proud, Self-sphered in those grand tails; All creatures glad and safe, I deem;— No guns nor springes in my dream!

XV.

The island's edges are a-wing
With trees that overbranch
The sea with song-birds welcoming
The curlews to green change,
And doves from half-closed lids espy.
The red and purple fish go by.

XVI

One dove is answering in trust
The water every minute,

Thinking so soft a murmur must Have her mate's cooing in it; So softly doth earth's beauty round

Infuse itself in ocean's sound.

XVII

My sanguine soul bounds forwarder To meet the bounding waves! Beside them straightway I repair,

To live within the caves; And near me two or three may dwell Whom dreams fantastic please as well.

XVIII

Long winding caverns! glittering far Into a crystal distance; Through clefts of which, shall many

a star Shine clear without resistance, And carry down its rays the smell

Of flowers above invisible.

viv

I said that two or three might choose Their dwelling near mine own: Those who would change man's, voice and use

For nature's way and tone— Man's veering heart and careless eyes, For Nature's steadfast sympathies.

xx

Ourselves, to meet her faithfulness, Shall play a faithful part; Her beautiful shall ne'er address The monstrous at our heart: Her musical shall ever touch Something within us also such.

XXI

Yet shall she not our mistress live, As doth the moon of ocean, Though gently as the moon she give Our thoughts a light and motion: More like a harp of many lays, Moving its master while he plays.

XXII

No sod in all that island doth Yawn open for the dead; No wind hath borne a traitor's oath; No earth, a mourner's tread; We cannot say by stream or shade, "Isuffered here,—was here betrayed."

XXIII

Our only "farewell" we shall laugh To shifting cloud or hour,

And use our only epitaph

To some bud turned a flower: Our only tears shall serve to prove Excess in pleasure or in love.

Our fancies shall their plumage catch From fairest island birds Whose eggs let young ones out at hatch.

Born singing! then our words Unconsciously shall take the dyes Of those prodigious fantasies.

Yea, soon, no consonant unsmooth Our smile-tuned lips shall reach: Sounds sweet as Hellas spake in youth, Shall glide into our speech,— (What music certes can you find As soft as voices which are kind?)

And often by the joy without And in us, overcome, We, through our musing, shall let float Such poems,—sitting dumb,— As Pindar might have writ, if he Had tended sheep in Arcady;

XXVII

Or Æschylus—the pleasant fields He died in, longer knowing; Or Homer, had men's sins and shields Been lost in Meles flowing: Or Poet Plato, had the undim Unsetting Godlight broke on him.

XXVIII

Choose me the cave most worthy

To make a place for prayer, And I will choose a praying voice To pour our spirits there. How silverly the echoes run-"Thy will be done,"-"Thy will be done.'

XXIX

Gently yet strangely uttered words !-They lift me from my dream. The island fadeth with its swards That did no more than seem! The streams are dry, no sun could find-The fruits are fallen, without wind !—! That few would look at them.

XXX

So oft the doing of God's will Our foolish wills undoeth! And yet what idle dream breaks ill, Which morning-light subdueth? And who would murmur and misdoubt.

When God's great sunrise finds him out?

THE DESERTED GARDEN

I MIND me in the days departed, How often underneath the sun With childish bounds I used to run To a garden long deserted.

The beds and walks were vanished quite;

And wheresoe'er had struck the spade, The greenest grasses Nature laid, To sanctify her right.

I called the place my wilderness, For no one entered there but I. The sheep looked in the grass to espy, And passed it ne'ertheless.

The trees were interwoven wild. And spread their boughs enough about To keep both sheep and shepherd out. But not a happy child.

Adventurous joy it was for me! I crept beneath the boughs, and found A circle smooth of mossy ground Beneath a poplar-tree.

Old garden rose-trees hedged it in, Bedropt with roses waxen-white, Well satisfied with dew and light, And careless to be seen.

Long years ago, it might befall, When all the garden flowers were trim,

The grave old gardener prided him On these the most of all,-

Some Lady, stately overmuch, Here moving with a silken noise, Has blushed beside them at the voice . That likened her to such.

Or these, to make a diadem, She often may have plucked and twined,

Half-smiling as it came to mind

Oh, little thought that Lady proud, A child would watch her fair white rose.

When buried lay her whiter brows, And silk was changed for shroud!—

Nor thought that gardener (full of scorns

For men unlearned and simple phrase), A child would bring it all its praise, By creeping through the thorns!—

To me upon my low moss seat,
Though never a dream the roses sent
Of science or love's compliment,
I ween they smelt as sweet.

It did not move my grief to see The trace of human step departed. Because the garden was deserted, The blither place for me!

Friends, blame me not! a narrow ken, Hath childhood 'twixt the sun and sward:

We draw the moral afterward— We feel the gladness then.

And gladdest hours for me did glide
In silence at the rose-tree wall:
A thrush made gladness musical
Upon the other side.

Nor he nor I did e'er incline
To peck or pluck the blossoms white—
How should I know but blossoms
might

Lead lives as glad as mine?

To make my hermit-home complete, I brought clear water from the spring Praised in its own low murmuring,—
And cresses glossy wet.

And so, I thought my likeness graw (Without the melancholy tale)
To ".gentle hermit of the dale,"
And Angelina too.

For oft I read within my nook Such minstrel stories! till the breeze Made sounds poetic in the trees,— And then I shut the book.

If I shut this wherein I write,
I hear no more the wind athwart
Those trees,—nor feel that childish
heart

Delighting in delight.

My childhood from my life is parted My footstep from the moss which drew

Its fairy circle round: anew The garden is deserted.

Another thrush may there rehearse The madrigals which sweetest are; No more for me!—myself afar Do sing a sadder verse.

Ah me, ah me! when erst I lay In that child's-nest so greenly wrought I laughed unto myself and thought' "The time will pass away."

And still I laughed, and did not fear But that, whene'er was past away The childish time, some happier play My womanhood would cheer.

I knew the time would pass away; And yet, beside the rose-tree wali, Dear God, how seldom, if at all, Did I look up to pray!

The time is past:—and now that grows

The cypress high among the trees, And I behold white sepulchres As well as the white rose.—

When wiser, meeker thoughts are given,

And I have learnt to lift my face, Reminded how earth's greenest place The colour draws from heaven.—

It something saith for earthly pain, But more for heavenly promise free, That I who was, would shrink to be That happy child again.

THE SOUL'S TRAVELLING

Ηδη νοερους Πετασαι ταρσους.

—Synesius

I DWELL amid the city ever.
The great humanity which beats
Its life along the stony streets,
Like a strong and unsunned river
In a self-made course,
I sit and hearken while it rolls.
Very sad and very hoarse
Certes is the flow of souls:
Infinitest tendencies,
By the finite, prest and pent,
In the finite, turbulent,

And how we tremble in surprise,

God's great plummet strikes the ground!

The champ of the steeds on the silver As they whirl the rich man's carriage

by: The beggar's whine as he looks at it.

But it goes too fast for charity. The trail on the street of the poor

man's broom,

That the lady who walks to her

palace-home, On her silken skirt may catch no dust:

The tread of the business-men who must

Count their per cents. by the paces thev take:

The cry of the babe unheard of its mother Though it lie on her breast, while she

thinks of the other

Laid yesterday where it will not wake. The flower-girl's prayer to buy roses and pinks

Held out in the smoke, like stars by dav:

The gin-door's oath that hollowly

Guilt upon grief and wrong upon

The cabman's cry to get out of the The dustman's call down the area-

The young maid's jest, and the old

wife's scold, The haggling talk of the boys at a

stall. The fight in the street which is backed

for gold,— The plea of the lawyers in Westminster Hall:

The drop on the stones of the blind man's staff.

As he trades in his own grief's sacred-

The brothel shriek, and the Newgate laugh,

The hum upon 'Change, and the organ's grinding, The grinder's face being nevertheless

Dry and vacant of even woe

When sometimes, with an awful While the children's hearts are leap-

At the merry music's winding!

The black-plumed funeral's creeping train

Long and slow (and yet they will go As fast as Life though it hurry and strain!)

Creeping the populous houses through And nodding their plumes at either

At many a house where an infant, new To the sunshiny world, has just struggled and cried:

At many a house, where sitteth a bride Trying the morrow's coronals

With a scarlet blush, to-day.— Slowly creep the funerals,

As none should hear the noise and say, The living, the living, must go away

To multiply the dead!

Hark! an upward shout is sent! In grave strong joy from tower to steeple

The bells ring out— The trumpets sound, the people shout. The young Queen goes to her parliament.

She turneth round her large blue eyes. More bright with childish memories Than royal hopes, upon the people: On either side she bows her head

Lowly, with a Queenly grace, And smile most trusting-innocent, As if she smiled upon her mother! The thousands press before each other To bless her to her face:

And booms the deep majestic voice Through trump and drum,-" May the Queen rejoice

In the people's liberties!"—

TIT

I dwell amid the city.

And hear the flow of souls in act and speech,

For pomp or trade, for merrymake or folly:

I hear the confluence and sum of each. And that is melancholy !-

Thy voice is a complaint, O crowned city,

The blue sky covering thee, like God's great pity.

IV
O blue sky! it mindeth me
Of places where I used to see
Its vast unbroken circle thrown
From the far pale-peaked hill
Out to the last verge of ocean—
As by God's arm it were done
Then for the first time, with the
emotion

of that first impulse on it still.
Oh, we spirits fly at will,
Faster than the winged steed
Whereof in old book we read,
With the sunlight foaming back
From his flanks, to a misty wrack,
And his nostril reddening proud
As he breasteth the steep thundercloud!
Smoother than Sabrina's chair

Gliding up from wave to air,
While she smileth debonair
Yet holy, coldly and yet brightly,
Like her own moonèd waters nightly,
Through her dripping hair.

rmough her dripping na

V moot

Very fast and smooth we fly, Spirits, though the flesh be by. All looks feed not from the eye, Nor all hearings from the ear; We can hearken and espy Without either; we can journey, Bold and gay, as knight to tourney; And though we wear no visor down To dark our countenance, the foe Shall never chafe us as we go.

VI

I am gone from peopled town!
It passeth its street-thunder round
My body which yet hears no sound.
For now another sound, another
Vision my soul's senses have—
O'er a hundred valleys deep,
Where the hills' green shadows sleep
Scarce known because the valley-trees
Cross those upland images—
O'er a hundred hills, each other
Watching to the western wave—
I have travelled,—I have found
The silent, lone, remembered ground

VII

I have found a grassy niche, Hollowed in a seaside hill, As if the ocean-grandeur, which Is aspectable from the place, Had struck the hill as with a mace Sudden and cleaving. You might fill That little nook with the little cloud Which sometimes lieth by the moon To beautify a night of June; A cavelike nook, which, opening all To the wide sea, is disallowed From its own earth's sweet pastoral; Cavelike, but roofless overhead, And made of verdant banks instead Of any rocks, with flowerets spread, Instead of spar and stalactite... Cowslips and daisies, gold and white....

Such pretty flowers on such green

sward,

You think the sea they look toward Doth serve them for another sky As warm and blue as that on high.

VIII

And in this hollow is a seat,
And when you shall have crept to it,
Slipping down the banks too steep
To be o'erbrowsed by the sheep,
Do not think—though at your feet
The cliffs' disrupt—you shall behold
The line where earth and ocean meet;
You sit too much above to view
The solemn confluence of the two:
You can hear them as they greet;
You can hear that evermore
Distance-softened noise, more old
Than Nereid's singing,—the tide
spent

Joining soft issues with the shore In harmony of discontent,— And when you hearken to the grave Lamenting of the underwave, You must believe in earth's communion, Albeit you witness not the union.

TX

Except that sound, the place is full Of silences, which, when you cull By any word, it thrills you so That presently you let them grow To meditation's fullest length Across your soul with a soul's strength:

And as they touch your soul, they

borrow s of its grande

As of its grandeur, so its sorrow,— That deathly odour which the clay Leaves on its deathlessness alway.

Alway! alway! and must this be? Rapid Soul from city gone. Dost thou carry inwardly What doth make the city's moan? Must this deep sigh of thine own Haunt thee with humanity? Green-visioned banks that are too

steep To be o'erbrowsed by the sheep. May all sad thoughts adown you creen Without a shepherd?—Mighty sea. Can we dwarf thy magnitude, And fit it to our straitest mood ?-O fair, fair Nature! are we thus Impotent and querulous Among thy workings glorious, Wealth and sanctities,-that still Leave us vacant and defiled. And wailing like a kissed child. Kissed soft against his will?

God. God!-With a child's voice I cry. Weak, sad, confidingly-God. God!

Thou knowest eyelids raised not The rapid river carrieth always up

Unto Thy love (as none of ours are), droop,

As ours, o'er many a tear! Thou knowest, though Thy universe is broad.

Two little tears suffice to cover all. Thou knowest,-Thou, Who art so prodigal

Of beauty,—we are oft but stricken

Expiring in the woods—that care for none

Of those delightsome flowers they die upon.

the mournful breath We name our souls,—self spoilt!—

by that strong passion Which paled Thee once with sighs.—

by that strong death Which made Thee once unbreathing—

from the wrack, Themselves have called around them.

call them back-Back to Thee in continuous aspiration! Droppeth some in soaring high, For here, O Lord,

For here they travel vainly,—vainly pass

From city pavement to untrodden sward.

Where the lark finds her deep nest in the grass

Cold with the earth's last dew Vea very vain

The greatest speed of all these souls of men.

Unless they travel upward to Thy Throne!

There, sittest Thou, the satisfying ONE.

With help for sins and holy perfectings

For all requirements—while the archangel, raising Unto Thy face his full ecstatic gazing. Forgets the rush and rapture of his

SOUNDS

wings!

Ηκουσας η ουκ ηκουσας;-ÆSCHYLUS.

HEARKEN, hearken! Many noises underneath The hoary ocean: Teaching his solemnity. Sounds of inland life and glee. Learnt beside the waving tree When the winds in summer prank Toss the shades from bank to bank And the quick rains, in emotion Which rather glads than grieves. Count and visibly rehearse The pulses of the universe Upon the summer leaves-Learnt among the lilies straight, When they bow them to the weight Of many bees, whose hidden hum Seemeth from themselves to come— O blissful Mouth, which breathed Learnt among the grasses green, Where the rustling mice are seen. By the gleaming, as they run, Of their quick eyes in the sun, And lazy sheep are browsing through, With their noses railed in dew; And the squirrel leaps adown, Holding fast the filbert brown; And the lark, with more of mirth In his song than suits the earth. To pour the rest out in the sky:

While the woodland doves, apart In the copse's leafy heart, Solitary not ascetic, Hidden and yet vocal, seem Joining, in a lovely psalm, Man's despondence, nature's calm, Half mystical and half pathetic, Like a sighing in a dream.1 All these sounds the river telleth, Softened to an undertone Which ever and anon he swelleth By a burden of his own,

In the ocean's ear. Av! and ocean seems to hear With an inward gentle scorn, Smiling to his caverns worn.

Hearken, hearken! The child is shouting at his play Just in the tramping funeral's way; The widow moans as she turns aside To shun the face of the blushing

While, shaking the tower of the ancient church.

The marriage bells do swing; And in the shadow of the porch An idiot sits, with his lean hands full Of hedgerow flowers and a poet's skull,

Laughing loud and gibbering, Because it is so brown a thing, While he sticketh the gaudy poppies red

In and out the senseless head Where all sweet fancies grew instead. And you may hear, at the self-same time.

Another poet who reads his rhyme, Low as a brook in the summer air,-Save when he droppeth his voice

adown, To dream of the amaranthine crown

1 "While floating up bright forms ideal Mistress, or friend, around me stream: Half sense-supplied, and half unreal, Like music mingling with a dream." John Kenyon.

I do not doubt that the "music" of the two concluding lines mingled, though very unconsciously, with my own "dream," and gave their form and pressure to the above distich. The ideas, however, being sufficiently distinct, I am satisfied with sending this note to the press after my verses, and with acknowledging another obligation to the valued friend to whom I already owe so many.

His mortal brows shall wear; And a baby cries with a feeble sound 'Neath the weary weight of the life

new-found; And an old man groans-with his testament

Only half-signed—for the life that's spent;

And lovers twain do softly say,

As they sit on a grave, "For ave. for aye!"

And foemen twain, while Earth, their mother.

Looks greenly upward, curse each other.

A schoolboy drones his task, with looks

Cast over the page to the elm-tree rooks:

A lonely student cries aloud, "Eureka!" clasping at his shroud; A beldame's age-cracked voice doth

sing To a little infant slumbering: A maid forgotten weeps alone,

Muffling her sobs on the trysting stone;

A sick man wakes at his own mouth's wail;

A gossip coughs in her thrice told tale; A muttering gamester shakes the dice: A reaper foretells good luck from the skies:

A monarch vows as he lifts his hand to them;

A patriot leaving his native land to them,

Cries to the world against perjured state:

A priest disserts upon linen skirts: A sinner screams for one hope more:

A dancer's feet do palpitate A piper's music out on the floor:

And nigh to the awful Dead, the living Low speech and stealthy steps are giving,

Because he cannot hear: And he who on that narrow bier Has room enough, is closely wound In silence piercing more than sound.

III

Hearken, hearken! God speaketh to thy soul: Using the supreme voice which doth confound

All life with consciousness of Deity, All senses into one,— As the seer-saint of Patmos, loving

John,

For whom did backward roll
The cloud-gate of the future, turned
to see

The Voice which spake. It speaketh now—

Through the regular breath of the calm creation,

Through the moan of the creature's desolation,

Striking, and in its stroke, resembling The memory of a solemn vow, Which pierceth the din of a festival Toonein the midst,—and he letteth fall The cup, with a sudden trembling.

Hearken, hearken!

God speaketh in thy soul; Saying, "O thou, that movest With feeble steps across this earth of Mine,

To break beside the fount thy golden bowl

And spill its purple wine,-

Look up to heaven and see how like a scroll,

My right hand hath thine immortality In an eternal grasping! Thou, that lovest

The songful birds and grasses underfoot,

And also what change mars and tombs pollute—

I am the end of love!—give love to

Me!

O thou that sinnest, grace doth more abound

Than all thy sin! sit still beneath My rood,

And count the droppings of My victim-blood,

And seek none other sound!"

Hearken, hearken!
Shall we hear the lapsing river
And our brother's sighing, ever,
And not the voice of God?

NIGHT AND THE MERRY MAN

'NEATH my moon what doest thou With a somewhat paler brow

Than she giveth to the ocean? He, without a pulse or motion, Muttering low before her stands. Lifting his invoking hands, Like a seer before a sprite, To catch her oracles of light. But thy soul out-trembles now Many pulses on thy brow! Where be all thy laughters clear, Others laughed, alone to hear? Where, thy quaint jests, said for fame? Where, thy dances, turned to game? Where, thy festive companies, Moonèd o'er with ladies' eyes, All more bright for thee, I trow? 'Neath my moon, what doest thou?

THE MERRY MAN

I am digging my warm heart,
Till I find its coldest part:
I am digging wide and low,
Further than a spade will go,
Till that, when the pit is deep
And large enough, I there may heap
All my present pain and past
Joy, dead things that look aghast
By the daylight.—Now 'tis done!
Throw them in, by one and one!
I must laugh, at rising sun.

Memories—of fancy's golden Treasures which my hands have holden,

Till the chillness made them ache:
Of childhood's hopes, that used to
wake

If birds were in a singing strain, And for less cause, sleep again; Of the moss seat in the wood Where I trysted solitude; Of the hill-top, where the wind Used to follow me behind. Then in sudden rush to blind Both my glad eyes with my hair, Taken gladly in the snare!

Of the climbing up the rocks,—
Of the playing 'neath the oaks,
Which retain beneath them now
Only shadow of the bough:
Of the lying on the grass
While the clouds did overpass,—
Only they, so lightly driven,
Seeming betwixt me and Haven:
Of the little prayers serene.
Murmuring of earth and sin;

Of large-leaved philosophy, Leaning from my childish knee; Of poetic book sublime, Soul-kissed for the first dear time,— Greek or English,—ere I knew Life was not a poem too! Throw them in, by one and one! I must laugh, at rising sun.

Of the glorious ambitions, Yet unquenched by their fruitions; Of the reading out the nights; Of the straining at mad heights; Of achievements, less descried By a dear few, than magnified; Of praises, from the many earned, When praise from love was undiscerned:

Of the sweet reflecting gladness, Softened by itself to sadness.— Throw them in, by one and one! I must laugh, at rising sun.

What are these? more, more than these!

Throw in, dearer memories!—
Of voices—whereof but to speak,
Makes mine own all sunk and weak;
Of smiles, the thought of which is
sweeping

All my soul to floods of weeping; Of looks, whose absence fain would weigh

My looks to the ground for aye; Of clasping hands—ah me! I wring Mine, and in a tremble fling Downward, downward, all this pain-

Ing:
Partings, with the sting remaining;
Meetings, with a deeper throe,
Since the joy is ruined so;
Changes, with a fiery burning—
(Shadows upon all the turning.)
Thoughts of—with a storm they
came—

Them, I have not breath to name! Downward, downward, be they cast In the pit! and now at last My work beneath the moon is done, And I shall laugh, at rising sun.

But let me pause or ere I cover All my treasures darkly over. I will speak not in thine ears, Only tell my beaded tears Silently, most silently! When the last is calmly told,

Let that same moist rosarv With the rest sepulchred be. Finished now. The darksome mould Sealeth up the darksome pit. I will lay no stone on it: Grasses I will sow instead, Fit for Queen Titania's tread: Flowers, encoloured with the sun, And as as written upon none. Thus, whenever saileth by The Lady World of dainty eve. Not a grief shall here remain, Silken shoon to damp or stain: And while she lisps, "I have not seen Any place more smooth clean '' . . .

Here she cometh !—Ha, ha !—who Laughs as loud as I can do?

EARTH AND HER PRAISERS

I

THE Earth is old; Six thousand winters make her heart a-cold, The sceptre slanteth from her palsied

hold.

She saith, "'Las me!—God's word that I was 'good'
Is taken back to heaven,

From whence when any sound comes,
I am riven

By some sharp bolt. And now no angel would
Descend with sweet dew-silence on

my mountains,

To glorify the lovely river-fountains
That gush along their side.

I see, O weary change! I see instead This human wrath and pride, These thrones, and tombs, judicial wrong, and blood:

And bitter words are poured upon mine head—

O Earth! thou art a stage for tricks unholy,

A church for most remorseful melancholy!

Thou art so spoilt, we should forget we had

An Eden in thee,—wert thou not so sad.

Sweet children, I am old! ye, every one, Do keep me from a portion of my sun: Give praise in change for brightness!

That I may shake my hills in infiniteness

Of breezy laughter, as in youthful mirth,

To hear Earth's sons and daughters praising Earth."

11

Whereupon a child began, With spirit running up to man, As by angel's shining ladder, (May he find no cloud above!) Seeming he had ne'er been sadder

All his days than now—
Sitting in the chestnut grove,
With that joyous overflow
Of smiling from his mouth, o'er brow
And cheek and chin, as if the breeze
Leaning tricksy from the trees
To part his golden hairs, had blown
Into an hundred smiles that one.

III

"O rare, rare Earth!" he saith,
"I will praise thee presently;
Not to-day; I have no breath!
I have hunted squirrels three—
Two ran down in the furzy hollow,
Where I could not see nor follow;
One sits at the top of the filbert tree,
With a yellow nut, and a mock at me,
Presently it shall be done,
When I see which way those two have

run;

When the mocking one at the filberttop
Shall leap a-down, and beside me stop;

Then, rare Earth, rare Earth,
Will I pause, having known thy worth,
To say all good of thee!"

IV

Next a lover, with a dream
'Neath his waking eyelids hidden,
And a frequent sigh unbidden,
And an idlesse all the day
Beside a wandering stream,
And a silence that is made
Of a word he dares not say,—
Shakes slow his pensive head.
"Earth, Earth!" saith he,
"If spirits, like thy roses, grew
On one stalk, and winds austere
Could but only blow them near,
To share each other's dew;

If, when summer rains agree
To beautify thy hills, I knew
Looking off them I might see
Some one very beauteous too,—
Then, Earth," saith he,
'I would praise . . . nay, nay—
not thee !"

v

Will the pedant name her next? Crabbed with a crabbed text. Sits he in his study ncok, With his elbow on a book, And with stately crossed knees, And a wrinkle deeply thrid Through his lowering brow. Caused by making proofs enow, That Plato in "Parmenides" Meant the same Spinoza did; Or, that an hundred of the groping Like himself, had made one Homer.— Homeros being a misnomer, What hath he to do with praise Of Earth, or aught? whene'er the sloping

Sunbeams through his window daze His eyes off from the learned phrase. Straightway he draws close the curtain.

May abstraction keep him dumb! Were his lips to ope, 'tis certain" "Derivatum est" would come.

VI

Then a mourner moveth pale
In a silence full of wail,
Raising not his sunken head,
Because he wandered last that way
With that one beneath the clay:
Weeping not, because that one,
The only one who would have said,
"Cease to weep, beloved!" has gone
Whence returneth comfort none.

The silence breaketh suddenly,—
"Earth, I praise thee!" crieth he:
"Thou hast a grave for also me."

VI

Ha, a poet! I know him by
The ecstasy-dilated eye,
Not uncharged with tears that ran
Upward from his heart of man;
By the cheek, from hour to hour,
Kindled bright, or sunken wan,
With a sense of lonely power;
By the brow, uplifted higher

Than others, for more low declining; By the lip which words of fire Overflowing have burned white, While they gave the nations light! Ay, in every time and place Ye may know the poet's face By the shade, or shining.

VIII

'Neath a golden cloud he stands, Spreading his impassioned hands. "O God's Earth!" he saith, "the

sign From the Father-soul to mine .Of all beauteous mysteries, Of all perfect images, Which, divine in His divine. In my human only are Very excellent and fair !-Think not, Earth, that I would raise Weary forehead in thy praise, (Weary, that I cannot go Farther from thy region low,) If were struck no richer meanings From thee than thyself. The leanings Of the close trees o'er the brim Of a sunshine-haunted stream, Have a sound beneath their leaves,

Not of wind, not of wind, Which the poet's voice achieves. The faint mountains heaped behind. Have a falling on their tops, Not of dew, not of dew, Which the poet's fancy drops. Viewless things his eyes can view: Driftings of his dream do light All the skies by day and night: And the seas that deepest roll, Carry murmurs of his soul. Earth, I praise thee! praise thou me! God perfecteth His creation With this recipient poet-passion, And makes the beautiful to be. I praise thee, O beloved sign, From the God-soul unto mine! Praise me, that I cast on thee The cunning sweet interpretation, The help and glory and dilation

Of mine immortality!"

IX

There was silence. None did dare To use again the spoken air Of that far-charming voice, until A Christian resting on the hill, With a thoughtful smile subdued (Seeming learnt in solitude) Which a weeper might have viewed Without new tears, did softly say, And looked up unto heaven alway While he praised the Earth—"O Earth,

I count the praises thou art worth, By thy waves that move aloud, By thy hills against the cloud, By thy valleys warm and green, By the copses' elms between; By their birds which, like a sprite Scattered, through a strong delight, Into fragments musical, Stir and sing in every bush; By thy silver founts that fall, As if to entice the stars at night To thine heart; by grass and rush, And little weeds the children pull, Mistook for flowers!

—Oh, beautiful Art thou, Earth, albeit worse Than in Heaven is called good! Good to us, that we may know Meekly from thy good to go; While the holy, crying Blood Puts its music kind and low, 'Twixt such ears as are not dull, And thine ancient curse!

v

"Praised be the mosses soft In thy forest pathways oft, And the thorns, which make us think Of the thornless river-brink,

Where the ransomed tread! Praised be thy sunny gleams, And the storm, that worketh dreams Of calm unfinished!

Of calm unfinished!
Praised be thine active days,
And thy night-time's solemn need,
When in God's dear book we read,
'No might shall be therein'.

'No night shall be therein.'
Praised be thy dwellings warm,
By household faggot's cheerful blaze,
Where, to hear of pardoned sin,
Pauseth oft the merry din,
Save the babe's upon the arm,
Who croweth to the crackling wood.
Yea,—and better understood,
Praised be thy dwellings cold,
Hid beneath the churchyard mould,
Where the bodies of the saints,
Separate from earthly taints,
Lie asleep, in blessing bound,
Waiting for the trumpet's sound

To free them into blessing;—none Weeping more beneath the sun, Though dangerous words of human love

Be graven very near, above.

XI

"Earth, we Christians praise thee

Even for the change that comes, With a grief, from thee to us! For thy cradles and thy tombs; For the pleasant corn and wine, And summer-heat; and also for The frost upon the sycamore, And hail upon the vine!"

THE VIRGIN MARY TO THE CHILD JESUS

"But see the Virgin blest
Hath laid her babe to rest."
—Milton's Hymn on the Nativity.

τ

SLEEP, sleep, mine Holy One!
My flesh, my Lord!—what name?
I do not know

A name that seemeth not too high or low,

Too far from me or Heaven.

My Jesus, that is best! that word
being given

By the majestic angel whose command

Was softly as a man's beseeching said, When I and all the earth appeared to stand

In the great overflow

Of light celestial from his wings and head.

Sleep, sleep, my saving One!

II

And art Thou come for saving, babybrowed

And speechless Being—art Thou come for saving?

The palm that grows beside our door is bowed

By treadings of the low wind from the south,

A restless shadow through the cham-

A restless shadow through the chamber waving:

Upon its bough a bird sings in the sun; But Thou, with that close slumber on Thy mouth,

Dost seem of wind and sun already weary.

Art come for saving, O my weary One?

III

Perchance this sleep that shutteth out the dreary

Earth-sounds and motions, opens on Thy soul

High dreams on fire with God; High songs that make the pathways where they roll

More bright than stars do theirs; and visions new Of Thine eternal Nature's old abode.

Suffer this mother's kiss,
Best thing that earthly is,
To glide the music and the glory
through,

Nor narrow in Thy dream the broad

upliftings Of any seraph wing!

Thus, noiseless, thus. Sleep, sleep, my dreaming One!

IV

The slumber of His lips meseems to run Through my lips to mine heart; to all its shiftings

Of sensual life, bringing contrariousness

In a great calm. I feel, I could lie down

As Moses did, and die, —and then live most.

I am 'ware of you, heavenly Presences, That stand with your peculiar light unlost,—

Each forehead with a high thought for a crown,

Unsunned i' the sunshine! I am 'ware. Ye throw

No shade against the wall! How motionless

Ye round me with your living statuary, While through your whiteness, in and outwardly,

Continual thoughts of God appear to

Like light's soul in itself! I bear, I bear,

To look upon the dropt lids of your eyes,

1 It is a Jewish tradition that Moses died of the kisses of God's lips. Though their external shining testifies To that beatitude within which were Enough to blast an eagle at his sun. I fall not on my sad clay face before

I look on His; I know

My spirit which dilateth with the woe Of His mortality.

May well contain your glory. Yea, drop your lids more low,-

Ye are but fellow-worshippers with me! Sleep, sleep, my worshipped One!

We sate among the stalls at Bethlehem.

The dumb kine from their fodder turning them,

> Softened their horned faces To almost human gazes Toward the newly Born.

The simple shepherds from the starlit brooks

Brought visionary looks,

As yet in their astonied hearing rung The strange, sweet angel-tongue.

The Magi of the East, in sandals worn. Knelt reverent, sweeping round,

With long pale beards, their gifts upon the ground,—

The incense, myrrh and gold These baby hands were impotent to hold.

So, let all earthlies and celestials wait Upon Thy royal state! Sleep, sleep, my kingly One!

I am not proud-meek angels, ve invest New meeknesses to hear such utter-

ance rest On mortal lips,—" I am not proud "

-not proud! Albeit in my flesh God sent His Son.

Albeit over Him my head is bowed, As others bow before Him, still mine heart

Bows lower than their knees. O centuries

That roll, in vision, your futurities My future grave athwart, -

Whose murmurs seem to reach me More oft than any else beneath the while I keep

Watch-o'er this sleep,-

Say of me as the Heavenly said-"Thou art

The blessedest of women! "-blessed-

Not holiest, not noblest-no high name,

Whose height misplaced may pierce me like a shame,

When I sit meek in Heaven!

For me-for me-

God knows that I am feeble like the rest!-

I often wandered forth, more child than maiden.

Among the midnight hills of Galilee, Whose summits looked heavenladen,

Listening to silence, as it seemed to be God's voice, so soft yet strong-so fain to press

Upon my heart as Heaven did on the height,

And waken up its shadows by a light, And show its vileness by a holiness.

Then I knelt down as silent as the night.

Too self-renounced for fears,

Raising my small face to the boundless blue Whose stars did mix and tremble in

my tears. God heard them falling after—with

His dew.

VIII

So, seeing my corruption, can I see This Incorruptible now born of me-This fair new Innocence no sun did chance

To shine on (for even Adam was no child), Created from my nature all defiled,—

This mystery, from out mine ignorance.-

Nor feel the blindness, stain, corruption, more

Than others do, or I did heretolore?— Can hands wherein such burden pure has been.

Not open with the cry, "Unclean, unclean!"

skies?

Ah King, ah Christ, ah son!

The kine, the shepherds, the abased I must not die, with mother's work Did all less lowly wait

Than I, upon Thy state !-Sleep, sleep, my kingly One!

Art Thou a King, then? Come, His universe.

Come, crown me Him a King! Pluck rays from all such stars as

never ging Their light where fell a curse. And make a crowning for this kingly

brow !-What is my word ?-Each empyreal

star Sits in a sphere afar In shining ambuscade: The child-brow, crowned by none,

Keeps its unchildlike shade. Sleep, sleep, my crownless One!

Unchildlike shade !-no other babe doth wear

An aspect very sorrowful, as Thou .-No small-babe smiles, my watching heart has seen.

To float like speech the speechless lips between:

No dovelike cooing in the golden air, No quick short joys of leaping baby-

Alas! our earthly good In heaven thought evil, seems too good for Thee: Yet sleep, my weary One!

And then the drear sharp tongue of prophecy,

With the dread sense of things which shall be done,

Doth smite me inly, like a sworda sword?

(That "smites the Shepherd")—then, I think aloud

The words "despised,"-" rejected," -every word

Recoiling into darkness as I view The Darling on my knee. Bright angels,—move not!—lest ye

stir the cloud Betwixt my soul and His futurity! to do,

And could not live—and see.

XII

It is enough to bear This image still and fair-This holier in sleep, Than a saint at prayer: This aspect of a child Who never sinned or smiled-This Presence in an infant's face:

This sadness most like love. This love than love more deep, This weakness like omnipotence It is so strong to move! Awful is this watching place, Awful what I see from hence-A king, without regalia. A God, without the thunder, A child, without the heart for

Ay, a Creator rent asunder From His first glory and cast away

On His own world, for me alone To hold in hands created, crying-Son!

XIII

That tear fell not on THEE. Beloved, yet Thou stirrest in Thy slumber!

Thou, stirring not for glad sounds out of number

Which through the vibratory palm trees run

From summer wind and bird. So quickly hast Thou heard A tear fall silently?-Wak'st Thou, O loving One?

TO BETTINE,

THE CHILD-FRIEND OF GOETHE "I have the second sight, Goethe!"-Letters of a Child.

BETTINE, friend of Goethe, Hadst thou the second sight-Upturning worship and delight With such a loving duty To his grand face, as women will The childhood 'neath thine evelids still?

II

Before his shrine to doom thee Using the same child's smile That heaven and earth, beheld erewhile

For the first time, won from thee, Ere star and flower grew dim and dead

Save at his feet and o'er his head.

III

Digging thine heart and throwing Away its childhood's gold,
That so its woman-depth might hold
His spirit's overflowing.
For surging souls, no worlds can
bound,
Their channel in the heart have

IV

found

O child, to change appointed, Thou hadst not second sight! What eyes the future view aright, Unless by tears anointed? Yea, only tears themselves can show The burning ones that have to flow.

v

O woman, deeply loving,
Thou hadst not second sight!
The star is very high and bright,
And none can see it moving.
Love looks around, below, above,
Yet all his prophecy is—love.

VT

The bird thy childhood's playing Sent onward o'er the sea. Thy dove of hope, came back to thee Without a leaf. Art laying Its wet cold wing, no sun can dry, Still in thy bosom, secretly?

VII

Our Goethe's friend, Bettine, I have the second sight! The stone upon his grave is white, The funeral stone between ye; And in thy mirror thou hast viewed Some change as hardly understood.

VIII

Where's childhood? where is Goethe? The tears are in thine eyes. Nay, thou shalt yet reorganise Thy maidenhood of beauty In his own glory, which is smooth Of wrinkles, and sublime in youth.

IX

The poet's arms have wound thee, He breathes upon thy brow, He lifts thee upward in the glow Of his great genius round thee,— The childlike poet undefiled

Preserving evermore THE CHILD.

MAN AND NATURE

A SAD man on a summer day Did look upon the earth and say— "Purple cloud the hill-top binding, Folded hills the valleys wind in, Valleys, with fresh streams among

you,— Streams, with bosky trees along you,— Trees, with many birds and blossoms,— Birds, with music-trembling bosoms,— Blossoms, dropping dews that wreathe

you,
To your fellow flowers beneath you,—
Flowers, that constellate on earth,—
Earth, that shakest to the mirth
Of the merry Titan ocean,
All his shining hair in motion!
Why am I thus the only one
Who can be dark beneath the sun?"

But when the summer day was past, He looked to heaven, and smiled at last.

Self-answered so—

"Because, O cloud, Pressing with thy crumpled shroud Heavily on mountain top,— Hills that almost seem to drop, Stricken with a misty death, To the valleys underneath,— Valleys, sighing with the torrent,— Waters, streaked with branches horrent,—

Branchless trees, that shake your head Wildly o'er your blossoms spread Where the common flowers are found,—Flowers, with foreheads to the ground,—

Ground, that shrickest while the sea With his iron smiteth thee—I am, besides, the only one Who can be bright without the sun."

A SEA-SIDE WALK

1

WE walked beside the sea,

After a day which perished silently Of its own glory—like the Princess weird

Who, combating the Genius, scorched and seared,

Uttered with burning breath, "Ho! victory!"

And sank adown, an heap of ashes pale;

So runs the Arab tale.

11

The sky above us showed A universal and unmoving cloud, On which the cliffs permitted us to

Only the outline of their majesty, As master-minds when gazed at by the crowd!

And, shining with a gloom, the water grey

Swang in its moon-taught way.

TT

Nor moon nor stars were out.

They did not dare to tread so soon about,

Though trembling, in the footsteps of the sun.

The light was neither night's nor day's, but one

Which, life-like, had a beauty in its doubt;

And Silence's impassioned breathings round

Seemed wandering into sound.

IV

O solemn-beating heart
Of nature! I have knowledge that
thou art

Bound unto man's by cords he cannot sever—

And, what time they are slackened by him ever

So to attest his own supernal part, Still runneth thy vibration fast and strong

The slackened cord along.

v

For though we never spoke
Of the grey water and the shaded
rock,—

Dark wave and stone unconsciously were fused

Into the plaintive speaking that we used,

Of absent friends and memories unforsook,

And, had we seen each other's face, we had

Seen haply, each was sad.

THE SEA-MEW

AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED TO M. E. H.

r

How joyously the young sea-mew Lay dreaming on the waters blue, Whereon our little bark had thrown A forward shade, the only one, (But shadows ever man pursue.)

II

Familiar with the waves and free, As if their own white foam were he, His heart, upon the heart of ocean, Lay learning all its mystic motion And throbbing to the throbbing sea,

II

And such a brightness in his eye, As if the ocean and the sky Within him had lit up and nurst A soul, God gave him not at first, To comprehend their majesty.

IV

We were not cruel, yet did sunder His white wing from the blue waves under,

And bound it, while his fearless eyes Shone up to ours in calm surprise, As deeming us some ocean wonder!

V

We bore our ocean bird unto A grassy place, where he might view The flowers that curtsey to the bees, The waving of the tall green trees, The falling of the silver dew.

V

But flowers of earth were pale to him Who had seen the rainbow fishes swim;

And when earth's dew around him lay, He thought of ocean's winged spray, And his eye waxed sad and dim,

The green trees round him only made A prison with their darksome shade: And drooped his wing, and mourned

For his own boundless glittering sea-Albeit he knew not they could fade.

Then One her gladsome face did bring. Her gentle voice's murmuring, In ocean's stead his heart to move, And teach him what was human love-He thought it a strange, mournful thing.

He lay down in his grief to die (First looking to the sea-like sky, That hath no waves!), because, alas! Our human touch did on him pass, And with our touch, our agony.

FELICIA HEMANS

TO L. E. L., REFERRING TO HER MONODY ON THAT POETESS

Thou bay-crowned living One that o'er the bay-crowned Dead art bowing.

And, o'er the shadeless moveless brow the vital shadow throwing. And o'er the sighless songless lips

the wail and music wedding, Dropping above the tranquil eyes. the tears not of their shedding !-

Take music from the silent Dead. whose meaning is completer; Reserve thy tears for living brows

where all such tears are meeter: And leave the violets in the grass to brighten where thou treadest!

No flowers for her ! no need of flowers -albeit "bring flowers," thou saidest.

Yes, flowers, to crown the "cup and Be happy, crowned and living One! lute!" since both may come to breaking:

Or flowers, to greet the "bride!" the heart's own beating works its aching:

Or flowers, to soothe the "captive's" sight, from earth's free bosom gathered.

Reminding of his earthly hope, then withering as it withered!

But bring not near her solemn corse. the type of human seeming!

Lay only dust's stern verity upon the dust undreaming!

And while the calm perpetual stars shall look upon it solely,

Her spherèd soul shall look on them, with eyes more bright and holy.

Nor mourn, O living One, because her part in life was mourning.

Would she have lost the poet's fire for anguish of the burning?-

The minstrel harp, for the strained string? the tripod, for the afflated Woe? or the vision, for those tears in which it shone dilated?

Perhaps she shuddered while the world's cold hand her brow was wreathing.

But never wronged that mystic breath which breathed in all her breathing.

Which drew from rocky earth and man. abstractions high and moving-

Beauty, if not the beautiful, and love, if not the loving.

Such visionings have paled in sight: the Saviour she descrieth.

And little recks who wreathed the brow which on His bosom lieth.

The whiteness of His innocence o'er all her garments, flowing,

There, learneth she the sweet "new song," she will not mourn in knowing.

VIII

and, as thy dust decayeth.

May thine own England say for thee, what now for Her it sayeth-" Albeit softly in our ears her silver song was ringing,

The footfall of her parting soul is softer than her singing!"

MEMORY AND HOPE

T

Back-Looking Memory
And prophet Hope both sprang from
out the ground;

One, where the flashing of Cherubic sword

Fell sad, in Eden's ward,—
And one, from Eden earth, within the
sound

Of the four rivers lapsing pleasantly, What time the promise after curse was said—

"Thy seed shall bruise his head,"

II

Poor Memory's brain is wild, As moonstruck by that flaming atmosphere

When she was born. Her deep eyes

shine and shone

With light that conquereth sun And stars to wanner paleness year by year:

With odorous gums, she mixeth things defiled;

She trampleth down earth's grasses green and sweet, With her far-wandering feet,

TTT

She plucketh many flowers, Their beauty on her bosom's coldness killing;

She teacheth every melancholy sound To winds and waters round;

She droppeth tears with seed where man is tilling The rugged soil in his exhausted

hours; She smileth—ah me! in her smile

doth go
A mood of deeper woe!

TYT

Hope tripped on out of sight, Crowned with an Eden wreath she saw not fade,

And went a-nodding through the wilderness.

With brow that shone no less Than sea-bird wings, by storm more frequent made,—

Searching the treeless rock for fruits of light:

Her fair quick feet being armed from stones and cold,

By slippers of pure gold.

v

Memory did Hope much wrong, And, while she dreamed, her slippers stole away;

But still she wended on with mirth unheeding,

The while her feet were bleeding, Till Memory met her on a certain day, And with most evil eyes did search her long

And cruelly, whereat she sank to ground

In a stark deadly swound.

VI

And so my Hope were slain, Had it not been that Thou wert standing near,

O Thou, who saidest "live" to creatures lying

In their own blood, and dying!
For Thou her forehead to Thine heart
didst rear

And make its silent pulses sing again,—
Pouring a new light o'er her darkened evne.

With tender tears from Thine!

VII

Therefore my Hope arose
From out her swound and gazed
upon Thy face,

And, meeting there that soft subduing look

Which Peter's spirit shook, Sank downward in a rapture to embrace

Thy pierced hands and feet with kisses close,

And prayed Thee to assist her evermore

To "reach the things before."

VIII

Then gavest Thou the smile Whence angel-wings thrill quick like summer lightning,

Vouchsafing rest beside Thee, where she never

From Love and Faith may sever.—

Whereat the Eden crown she saw not Though on its slope men sow and whitening.

A time ago, though whitening all the while.

Reddened with life, to hear the Voice which talked

To Adam as he walked.

THE SLEEP

"He giveth His beloved sleep." PSALM CXXVII. 2.

Or all the thoughts of God that are Borne inward unto souls afar, Along the Psalmist's music deep, Now tell me if that any is, For gift or grace, surpassing this-"He giveth His beloved, sleep"?

What would we give to our beloved? The hero's heart, to be unmoved, The poet's star-tuned harp, to sweep, The patriot's voice, to teach and rouse.

The monarch's crown, to light the brows?-

"He giveth His beloved, sleep."

What do we give to our beloved? A little faith, all undisproved. A little dust, to overweep, And bitter memories to make The whole earth blasted for our sake.

"He giveth His beloved, sleep."

"Sleep soft, beloved!" we sometimes

But have no tune to charm away Sad dreams that through the eyelids creep:

But never doleful dream again Shall break the happy slumber when "He giveth His beloved, sleep."

O earth, so full of dreary noises! O men, with wailing in your voices! O delved gold, the wailers heap! O strife, O curse, that o'er it fall! God strikes a silence through you all,

And "giveth His beloved, sleep." His dews drop mutely on the hill, His cloud above it saileth still.

reap.

More softly than the dew is shed. Or cloud is floated overhead, "He giveth His beloved, sleep."

VII

Yea, men may wonder while they scan A living, thinking, feeling man, Confirmed in such a rest to keep, But angels say—and through the word I think their happy smile is heard-"He giveth His beloved, sleep."

For me, my heart that erst did go Most like a tired child at a show. That sees through tears the jugglers leap,-

Would now its wearied vision close. Would childlike on His love repose. Who "giveth His beloved, sleep!"

And, friends, dear friends,—when it shall be

That this low breath is gone from me, And round my bier ye come to weep. Let one, most loving of you all, Say, "Not a tear must o'er her fall— He giveth His beloved, sleep.'

MY DOVES

"O Weisheit! Du red'st wie eine Taube!" GOETHE.

My little doves have left a nest Upon an Indian tree. Whose leaves fantastic take their

Or motion from the sea: For, ever there, the sea-winds go With sunlit paces to and fro. The tropic flowers looked up to it,

The tropic stars looked down, And there my little doves did sit. With feathers softly brown, And glittering eyes that showed their

To general Nature's deep delight.

And God them taught, at every close Of murmuring waves beyond,

And green leaves round, to interpose Their choral voices fond. Interpreting that love must be The meaning of the earth and sea.

Fit ministers! Of living loves, Theirs hath the calmest fashion; Their living voice the likest moves To lifeless intonation,-The lovely monotone of springs

And winds and such insensate things.

My little doves were ta'en away From that glad nest of theirs, Across an ocean rolling grey,

And tempest-clouded airs. My little doves !--who lately knew The sky and wave by warmth and blue!

And now, within the city prison, In mist and chillness pent, With sudden upward look they listen For sounds of past content-For lapse of water, swell of breeze,

Or nut-fruit falling from the trees. The stir without the glow of passion-The triumph of the mart—

The gold and silver as they clash on Man's cold metallic heart—

bread,-

These only sounds are heard instead.

Yet still, as on my human hand Their fearless heads they lean, And almost seem to understand

What human musings mean-(Their eyes, with such a plaintive shine,

Are fastened upwardly to mine!)

Soft falls their chant, as on the nest

Beneath the sunny zone; For love that stirred it in their breast Has not aweary grown,

And, 'neath the city's shade can keep The well of music clear and deep.

And love that keeps the music, fills With pastoral memories:

All echoings from out the hills, All droppings from the skies, All flowings from the wave and wind, Remembered in their chant, I find.

So teach ye me the wisest part, My little doves! to move Along the city-ways with heart Assured by holy love,

And vocal with such songs as own A fountain to the world unknown.

'Twas hard to sing by Babel's stream— More hard, in Babel's street!

But if the soulless creatures deem Their music not unmeet For sunless walls—let us begin, Who wear immortal wings within!

To me, fair memories belong Of scenes that used to bless, For no regret, but present song,

And lasting thankfulness, And very soon to break away, Like types, in purer things than they.

I will have hopes that cannot fade, For flowers the valley yields: I will have humble thoughts, instead Of silent, dewy fields:

My spirit and my God shall be My seaward hill, my boundless sea!

THE LITTLE FRIEND

WRITTEN IN THE BOOK WHICH SHE MADE AND SENT TO ME —το δ' ηδη εξ οφθαλμων απεληλυθεν MARCUS ANTONINUS.

The roar of wheels, the cry for THE book thou givest, dear as such, Shall bear thy dearer name; And many a word the leaves shall touch,

> For thee who form'dst the same! And on them, many a thought shall

'Neath memory's rain and sun, Of thee, glad child, who dost not know

That thought and pain are one!

Yes! thoughts of thee, who satest oft, A while since, at my side-

So wild to tame,—to move so soft, So very hard to chide:

The childish vision at thine heart, The lesson on the knee:

The wandering looks which would depart,

Like gulls, across the sea!

The laughter, which no half-belief In wrath could all suppress; The falling tears, which looked like

And were but gentleness: The fancies sent, for bliss, abroad. As Eden's were not done-Mistaking still the cherub's sword For shining of the sun!

The sportive speech with wisdom in't-The question strange and boldThe childish fingers in the print Of God's creative hold:

The praying words in whispers said, The sin with sobs confest;

The leaning of the young meek head Upon the Saviour's breast!

The gentle consciousness of praise, With hues that went and came: The brighter blush, a word could raise,

Were that—a father's name!

The shadow on thy smile for each That on his face could fall! So quick hath love been, thee to teach, What soon it teacheth all.

Sit still as erst beside his feet! The future days are dim,-But those will seem to thee most

sweet

Which keep thee nearest him! Sit at his feet in quiet mirth,

And let him see arise A clearer sun and greener earth Within thy loving eyes !-

Ah, loving eyes! that used to lift Your childhood to my face— That leave a memory on the gift

I look on in your place— May bright-eyed hosts your guar-

dians be From all but thankful tears,—

While, brightly as ye turned on me, Ye meet th' advancing years!

THE STUDENT

Τι ουν τουτο προς σε; και ουδεν λεγω οτι προς τον τεθνηκοτα, αλλα προς τον ζωντα, τι ὁ επαινος

MARCUS ANTONINUS.

"Mymidnightlamp is weary as my soul,

And, being unimmortal, has gone out. And now alone you moony lamp of heaven,

Which God lit and not man, illuminates

These volumes, others wrote in weari-

As I have read them; and this cheek and brow,

Whose paleness, burned in with heats

of thought, Would make an angel smile to see how ill

Clay thrust from Paradise consorts with mind-

If angels could, like men, smile bitterly.

"Yet, must my brow be paler! I have vowed

To clip it with the crown which cannot fade,

When it is faded. Not in vain ye cry, O glorious voices that survive the tongues From whence was drawn your sepa-

rate sovereignty-

For I would reign beside you! I

would melt The golden treasures of my health and life

Into that name! My lips are vowed apart

From cheerful words; mine ears, from pleasant sounds;

Mine eyes, from sights God made so beautiful,—

My feet, from wanderings under shady trees; Mine hands, from clasping of dear-

loving friends,— My very heart, from feelings which

move soft! Vowed am I from the day's delight-

someness, And dreams of night! and when the house is dumb

In sleep, which is the pause 'twixt life and life,

I live and waken thus; and pluck away

Slumber's sleek poppies from my painèd lids-Goading my mind with thongs

wrought by herself, To toil and struggle along this

mountain-path Which hath no mountain-airs; until she sweat

Like Adam's brow, and gasp, and rend away

In agony, her garment of the flesh!"

And so his midnight lamp was lit anew, And burned till morning. lamp of life

Till morning burned not! He was found embraced,

Close, cold, and stiff, by Death's compelling sleep;

His breast and brow supported on a We cannot mete thy baseness: being

Of its divineness and beatitude-Words which had often caused that

heart to throb,

lay they now.

Without a single beating in the pulse, And all the fever gone!

I saw a bay Spring verdant from a newly-fashioned grave.

The grass upon the grave was verdanter.

That being watered by the eyes of

Who bore not to look up toward the Others looked on it-some, with

passing glance,

Because the light wind stirred in its leaves:

And some, with sudden lighting of Had I beheld thee dead and still, the soul

In admiration's ecstasy !—Ay! some Did wag their heads like oracles, and say,

berèd The heart which housed the root,

except that ONE Whose sight was lost in weeping!

Is it thus,

Ambition, idol of the intellect? Shall we drink aconite, alone to use Thy golden bowl? and sleep ourselves to death-

To dream thy visions about life? O Power

Thou art a very feebleness !- before Thy clayey feet we bend our knees of And round thy senseless brow bind

diadems

'A god!"

With voices mortal-hoarse! Who can discern

Th' infirmities they share in? Being blind,

We cannot feel thy weakness: being Weep bitterly and selfishly, low.

unwise.

Charactered over with a praise of fame, We cannot understand thy idiocy!

THE EXILE'S RETURN

That cheek to burn; though silent WHEN from thee, weeping, I removed.

And from my land for years. I thought not to return, Beloved, With those same parting tears. I come again to hill and lea. Weeping for thee.

I clasped thine hand when standing last

Upon the shore in sight. The land is green, the ship is fast, I shall be there to-night! I shall be there—no longer we— No more with thee.

I might more clearly know, How heart of thine could turn as chill

As hearts by nature so; "'Tis very well!"—but none remem- How change could touch the falsehood-free

And changeless thee !

But now thy tender looks last-seen Within my soul remain, 'Tis hard to think that they have been, . . .

To be no more again-That I shall vainly wait—ah me! A word from thee.

I could not bear to look upon That mound of funeral clay, Where one sweet voice is silence, -one Æthereal brow decay With paralytic hands, and shout Where all thy mortal I might see, But never thee,

For thou art where all friends are gone, Whose parting pain is o'er: We cannot see thy blindness: being And I, who love and weep alone, Where thou wilt weep no more, For me, not thee.

I know Beloved, thou canst not know That I endure this pain!

For saints in Heaven, the Scriptures show,

Can never grieve again-And grief, once known for mine,

would be Still shared by thee!

A SONG AGAINST SINGING

TO E. J. H.

THEY bid me sing to thee, Thou golden-haired, and silvervoicèd child,

With lips by no worse sigh than sleep's, defiled;

With eyes unknowing how tears dim the sight,

With feet all trembling at the new delight

Treaders of earth to be!

Ah no! the lark may bring A song to thee from out the morning cloud,

The merry river from its lilies bowed. The brisk rain from the trees, the lucky wind,

That half doth make its music, half doth find,-

But I—I may not sing.

How could I think it right. New-comer on our earth as, Sweet, thou art,

To bring a verse from out an human heart.

Made heavy with accumulated tears, And cross with such amount of weary years,

Thy day-sum of delight?

E'en if the verse were said, Thou, who wouldst clap thy tiny hands to hear

The wind or rain, gay bird or river

Wouldst, at that sound of sad humani-

Upturn thy bright uncomprehending

And bid me play instead.

Therefore no song of mine! But prayer in place of singing ! prayer that would

Commend thee to the new-creating God.

Whose gift is childhood's heart without its stain

Of weakness, ignorance, and changing vain-

That gift of God be thine!

So wilt thou ave be young, In lovelier childhood than thy shining brow

And pretty winning accents make thee now!

Yea, sweeter than this scarce articulate sound

(How sweet!) of "father," "mother," shall be found

The Abba on thy tongue.

And so, as years shall chase Each other's shadows, thou wilt less resemble

Thy fellows of the earth who toil and tremble.

Than him thou seest not, thine angel

Yet meek, whose ever-lifted eyes behold

The Ever-loving's face.

STANZAS

I MAY sing; but minstrel's singing Ever ceaseth with his playing. I may smile; but time is bringing Thoughts for smiles to wear away in. I may view thee, mutely loving; But shall view thee so in dying! I may sigh; but life's removing, And with breathing endeth sighing! Be it so!

When no song of mine comes near thee.

Will its memory fail to soften? When no smile of mine can cheer thee, Will thy smile be used as often? When my looks the darkness boundeth.

Will thine own be lighted after? When my sigh no longer soundeth, Wilt thou list another's laughter? Be it so!

THE YOUNG QUEEN

"This awful responsibility is imposed upon me so suddenly and at so early a period of my life, that I should feel myself utterly oppressed by the burden, were I not sustained by the hope that Divine Providence, Which has called me to this work, will give me strength for the performance of it."

The Queen's Declaration in Council.

THE shroud is yet unspread To wrap our crowned dead; His soul hath scarcely hearkened for the thrilling word of doom; And Death that makes serene Ev'n brows where crowns have

been,

Hath scarcely time to meeten his, for silence of the tomb.

St. Paul's king-dirging note
The city's heart hath smote—
The city's heart is struck with thought
more solemn than the tone!

A shadow sweeps apace Before the nation's face, Confusing in a shapeless blot the sepulchre and throne.

The palace sounds with wail—
The courtly dames are pale—
A widow o'er the purple bows, and
weeps its splendour dim
And we whe hold the hear

And we who hold the boon, A king for freedom won,

Do feel eternity rise up between our thanks and him,

And while all things express All glory's nothingness, A royal maiden treadeth firm where

that departed trod!

The deathly scented crown

Weighs her shining ringlets down;

But calm she lifts her trusting face, and calleth upon God.

Her thoughts are deep within her:
No outward pageants win her

From memories that in her soul are rolling wave on wave—

Her palace walls enring
The dust that was a king—
And very cold beneath her feet, she
feels her father's grave.

And One, as fair as she, Can scarce forgotten be,— Who clasped a little infant dead, for all a kingdom's worth!

The mourned, blessed One, Who views Jehovah's throne,

Aye smiling to the angels, that she lost a throne on earth.

Perhaps our youthful Queen Remembers what has been— Her childhood's rest by loving heart, and sport on grassy sod—

Alas! can others wear A mother's heart for her?

But calm she lifts her trusting face, and calleth upon God.

Yea! call on God, thou maiden Of spirit nobly laden,

And leave such happy days behind, for happy-making years! A nation looks to thee

For stedfast sympathy:
Make room within thy bright clear
eyes, for all its gathered tears.

And so the grateful isles
Shall give thee back their
smiles.

And as thy mother joys in thee, in them shalt thou rejoice;

Rejoice to meekly bow A somewhat paler brow,

While the King of Kings shall bless thee by the British people's voice!

VICTORIA'S TEARS

"Hark! the reiterated clangour sounds!
Now murmurs, like the sea or like the storm,
Or like the flames on forests, move and mount
From rank to rank, and loud and louder roll,
Till all the people is one vast applause."

LANDOR'S Gebt's.

"O MAIDEN! heir of kings!
A king has left his place!
The majesty of Death has swept
All other from his face!

And thou upon thy mother's breast No longer lean adown,

But take the glory for the rest, And rule the land that loves thee best!"

She heard and wept— She wept, to wear a crown!

They decked her courtly halls; They reined her hundred steeds; They shouted at her palace gate, "A noble Queen succeeds!" Her name has stirred the mountain's sleep.

Her praise has filled the town! And mourners God had stricken deep, Looked hearkening up, and did not weep.

Alone she wept, Who wept, to wear a crown!

She saw no purples shine, For tears had dimmed her eyes; She only knew her childhood's flowers

Were happier pageantries!
And while her heralds played the part,
For million shouts to drown—
"God save the Queeen" from hill to
mart,—

She heard through all her beating heart,

And turned and wept— She wept, to wear a crown!

God save thee, weeping Queen!
Thou shalt be well beloved!
The tyrant's sceptre cannot move,
As those pure tears have moved!
The nature in thine eyes we see,
That tyrants cannot own—

The love that guardeth liberties! Strange blessing on the nation lies,

Whose Sovereign wept— Yea! wept, to wear its crown!

God bless thee, weeping Queen, With blessing more divine! And fill with happier love than earth's, That tender heart of thine! That when the thrones of earth shall be

As low as graves brought down; A pierced hand may give to thee The crown which angels shout to see! Thou wilt not weep,

To wear that heavenly crown!

VANITIES

"From fading things, fond men, lift your desire."
DRUMMOND.

Could be be very blest in hearkening Youth's often danced-to melodies—Hearing it piped, the midnight darkening

Doth come to show the starry skies,— To freshen garden flowers, the rain? It is in vain, it is in vain!

Could ye be very blest in urging A captive nation's strength to thunder Out into foam, and with its surging The Xerxean fetters break asunder? The storm is cruel as the chain! It is in vain, it is in vain!

Could ye be very blest in paling Your brows with studious nights and days,

When like your lamps your life is failing,

And sighs, not breath, are wrought from praise?

Your tombs, not ye, that praise retain—

It is in vain, it is in vain!

Yea! but ye could be very blest, If some ye nearest love were nearest! Must they not love when loved best? Must ye not happiest love when dearest?

Alas!—how hard to feel again, It is in vain, it is in vain!

For those ye love are not unsighing,— They are unchanging least of all: And ye the loved—ah! no denying, Will leave your lips beneath the pall, When passioned ones have o'er it sain—

"It is in vain, it is in vain!"

BEREAVEMENT

When some Beloveds, 'neath whose eyelids lay

The sweet lights of my childhood, one by one

Did leave me dark before the natural sun,

And I astonied fell, and could not pray,—

A thought within me to myself did say, "Is God less God, that thou art left undone?

Rise, worship, bless Him! in this sackcloth spun

As in that purple!". But I are word.

As in that purple!"—But I answered nay!

What child his filial heart in words can loose,

If he behold his tender father raise The hand that chastens sorely? Can he choose

But sob in silence with an upward, gaze?—

Discerns in speechless tears, both prayer and praise.

CONSOLATION

ALL are not taken! there are left behind

Living Beloveds, tender looks to bring. And make the daylight still a happy thing.

And tender voices, to make soft the wind.

But if it were not so-if I could find No love in all the world for comfort-

Nor any path but hollowly did ring, Where "dust to dust" the love from life disjoined-

And if, before those sepulchres unmoving,

I stood alone (as some forsaken lamb Goes bleating up the moors in weary dearth)

Crying, "Where are ye, O my loved and loving?"...

I know a Voice would sound, "Daughter, I AM.

Can I suffice for HEAVEN, and not for earth?"

TO MARY RUSSELL MITFORD

IN HER GARDEN

WHAT time I lay these rhymes anear thy feet,

Benignant friend! I will not proudly

As better poets use, "These flowers I lay,"

Because I would not wrong thy roses sweet,

By spoiling so their name. And yet, repeat

Thou, overleaning them this springtime day,

With heart as open to love as theirs to May,-

"Low-rooted verse may reach some heavenly heat,

Even like my blossoms, if as naturetrue.

Though not as precious." Thou art unperplext,

Dear friend, in whose dear writings drops the dew

And my great Father, thinking fit to And blow the natural airs, -thou, who art next

> To nature's self in cheering the world's view.-

> To preach a sermon on so known a text!

A SUPPLICATION FOR LOVE

HYMN I

"The Lord Jesus, although gone to the Father, and we see Him no more, is still present with His Church; and in His heavenly glory expends upon her as intense a love, as in the agony of the garden, and the crucifixion of the tree. Those eyes that wept, still gaze upon her."—Recalled words of an extempore Discourse, preached at Sidmouth, 1833.

God, named Love, Whose fount Thou

Thy crownless Church before Thee stands.

With too much hating in her heart, And too much striving in her hands!

O loving Lord! O slain for love! Thy blood upon Thy garments came-

Inwrap their folds our brows above. Before we tell Thee all our shame!

" Love as Hoved you," was the sound That on Thy lips expiring sate! Sweet words, in bitter strivings drowned!

We hated as the worldly hate.

The spear that pierced for love Thy side,

We dared for wrathful use to crave: And with our cruel noise denied Its silence to Thy blood-red grave!

Ah, blood! that speaketh more of love

Than Abel's—could we speak like Cain,

And grieve and scare that holy Dove. The parting love-gift of the Slain?

Yet, Lord, Thy wronged love fulfil! Thy Church, though fallen, before Thee stands-

Behold, the voice is Jacob's still, Albeit the hands are Esau's hands!

Hast thou no tears, like those be-Upon Thy Zion's ancient part?

No moving looks, like those which

Their softness through a traitor's heart?

No touching tale of anguish dear; Whereby like children we may

All trembling, to each other near, And view each other's face, and

Oh, move us-Thou hast power to move-

One in the one Beloved to be! Teach us the heights and depths of love-

Give THINE—that we may love like THEE!

THE MEDIATOR

HYMN II

"As the greatest of all sacrifices was required, we may be assured that no other would have sufficed."—Boyd's Essay on the Atonement.

How high Thou art! our songs can

No music Thou couldst stoop to

But still the Son's expiring groan Is vocal in the Father's ear.

How pure Thou art! our hands are dved

With curses, red with murder's

But He hath stretched His hands to

The sins that pierced them from Thy view.

How strong Thou art! we tremble lest The thunders of Thine arm be moved-

But HE is lying on Thy breast. And Thou must clasp Thy best Beloved!

How kind Thou art! Thou didst not choose

To joy in Him for ever so:

But that embrace Thou wilt not loose For vengeance, didst for love fore-

High God, and pure, and strong, and kind !

Thy brightness in His face we find Behold our darkness only there!

THE WEEPING SAVIOUR

HYMN III

Whether His countenance can thee affright, Tears in His eyes quench the amazing light.

When Jesus' friend had ceased to be, Still Jesus' heart its friendship kept-

"Where have ye laid 'nim?"-"Come and see!"

But ere His eyes could see, they wept.

Lord! not in sepulchres alone,

Corruption's worm is rank and free; The shroud of death our bosoms own— The shades of sorrow! Come and see 1

Come, Lord! God's image cannot shine

Where sin's funereal darkness lowers-

Come! turn those weeping eyes of Thine

Upon these sinning souls of ours!

And let those eyes, with shepherd care, Their moving watch above us keep; Till love the strength of sorrow wear. And as Thou weepedst, we may weep!

For surely we may weep to know, So dark and deep our spirit's stain; That had Thy blood refused to flow. Thy very tears had flowed in vain.

THE MEASURE

HYMN IV

"He comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure" (שליש).—Isaian xl. 12.

"Thou givest them tears to drink in great measure" (שליש).-Psalm Ixxx. 5.1

God, the Creator, with a pulseless hand

Of unoriginated power, hath weighed The dust of earth and tears of man, in one

1 I believe that the word occurs in no other The low, the foul, the feeble, spare ! part of the Hebrew Scriptures.

Measure and by one weight;-So saith His holy book.

Shall we, then, who have issued from the dust

And there return,-shall we, who toil for dust.

And wrap our winnings in this dusty life,

Say," No more tears, Lord God! The measure runneth o'er"?

Oh, holder of the balance, laughest Thou ?

Nay, Lord! be gentler to our foolishness.

For His sake who assumed our dust, and turns

On Thee pathetic eyes

Still moistened with our tears!

And teach us, O our Father, while we weep. To look in patience upon earth and

learn-Waiting, in that meek gesture, till at

last

Those tearful eyes be filled With the dry dust of death.

COWPER'S GRAVE

Iris a place where poets crowned may feel the heart's decaying,-

It is a place where happy saints may weep amid their praying: Yet let the grief and humbleness, as

low as silence, languish! Earth surely now may give her calm to whom she gave her anguish.

Opoets! from a maniac's tongue, was poured the deathless singing!

O Christians! at your cross of hope, a hopeless hand was clinging! O men! this man in brotherhood your weary paths beguiling,

Groaned inly while he taught you peace, and died while ye were smiling!

And now, what time ye all may read Nor man, nor nature satisfy, whom through dimming tears his story,

How discord on the music fell, and darkness on the glory;

And how, when, one by one, sweet sounds and wandering lights departed,

He wore no less a loving face because so broken-hearted;

He shall be strong to sanctify the poet's high vocation,

And bow the meekest Christian down in meeker adoration;

Nor ever shall he be, in praise, by wise or good forsaken,

Named softly as the household name of one whom God hath taken.

With quiet sadness and no gloom I learn to think upon him,

With meekness that is gratefulness to God Whose heaven hath won

Who suffered once the madness-cloud. to His own love to blind him,

But gently led the blind along where breath and bird could find him,

And wrought within his shattered brain, such quick poetic senses, As hills have language for, and stars, harmonious influences!

The pulse of dew upon the grass kept his within its number,

And silent shadows from the trees refreshed him like a slumber.

Wild timid hares were drawn from woods to share his home-caresses, Uplooking to his human eyes with sylvan tendernesses:

The very world, by God's constraint, from falsehood's ways removing, Its women and its men became

beside him, true and loving.

But while in blindness he remained unconscious of the guiding,

And things provided came without the sweet sense of providing,

He testified this solemn truth, though frenzy desolated-

only God created !

Like a sick child that knoweth not his mother, while she blesses

coolness of her kisses;

That turns his fevered eyes around -"My mother! where's my mother?"-

As if such tender words and looks could come from any other !-

The fever gone, with leaps of heart he sees her bending o'er him,

Her face all pale from watchful love, the unweary love she borehim !-

Thus, woke the poet from the dream his life's long fever gave him,

Beneath those deep pathetic Eyes, which closed in death to save

Thus? oh, not thus! no type of earth could image that awaking, Wherein he scarcely heard the chant of seraphs, round him breaking, Or felt the new immortal throb of

soul from body parted.

But felt those eyes alone, and knew " My Saviour! not deserted!"

Deserted! who hath dreamt that when the cross in darkness rested Upon the Victim's hidden face no

love was manifested?

What frantic hands outstretched have e'er the atoning drops averted? What tears have washed them from the soul, that one should be

deserted?

Deserted! God could separate from His own essence rather,

And Adam's sins have swept between the righteous Son and Father:

Yea, once, Immanuel's orphaned cry, His universe hath shaken— It went up single, echoless, "My God. I am forsaken!"

It went up from the Holy's lips amid His lost creation,

That, of the lost, no son should use those words of desolation.

That earth's worst frenzies, marring hope, should mar not hope's fruition,

And drops upon his burning brow, the And I, on Cowper's grave, should see his rapture, in a vision!

THE WEAKEST THING

Which is the weakest thing of all Mine heart can ponder? The sun, a little cloud can pall With darkness yonder?

The cloud, a little wind can move Where'er it listeth?

The wind, a little leaf above. Though sere, resisteth?

What time that yellow leaf was green, My days were gladder: But now, whatever Spring may mean,

I must grow sadder.

Ah me! a leaf with sighs can wring My lips asunder-

Then is mine heart the weakest thing Itself can ponder?

Yet, Heart, when sun and cloud are pined,

And drop together.

And at a blast which is not wind. The forests wither,

Thou, from the darkening deathly curse.

To glory breakest,--The Strongest of the universe Guarding the weakest!

THE PET-NAME

" the name Which from THEIR lips seemed a caress." MISS MITFORD'S Dramatic Scenes.

I have a name, a little name, Uncadenced for the ear. Unhonoured by ancestral claim, Unsanctified by prayer and psalm The solemn font anear.

It never did, to pages wove For gay romance, belong; It never dedicate did move, As "Sacharissa," unto love— "Orinda," unto song.

TTT

Though I write books, it will be read Upon the leaves of none;
And afterward, when I am dead,
Will ne'er be graved for sight or tread,
Across my funeral stone.

IV

This name, whoever chance to call, Perhaps your smile may win—
Nay, do not smile! mine eyelids fall
Over mine eyes and feel withal
The sudden tears within.

v

Is there a leaf that greenly grows
Where summer meadows bloom,
But gathereth the winter snows,
And changeth to the hue of those,
If lasting till they come?

V

Is there a word, or jest, or game, But time encrusteth round With sad associate thoughts the same?

And so to me my very name Assumes a mournful sound.

VII

My brother gave that name to me When we were children twain,— When names acquired baptismally Were hard to utter, as to see That life had any pain.

VIII

No shade was on us then, save one Of chestnuts from the hill— And through the word our laugh did run As part thereof! The mirth being

He calls me by it still.

TV

Nay, do not smile! I hear in it
What none of you can hear!
The talk upon the willow seat,
The bird and wind that did repeat
Around, our human cheer.

X
I hear the birthday's noisy bliss,
My sisters' woodland glee,—
My father's praise, I did not miss,
When stooping down he cared to kiss
The poet at his knee;—

XI

And voices, which to name me, aye
Their tenderest tones were keeping!—

To some I never more can say

An answer, till God wipes away

In heaven, these drops of weeping.

XII

My name to me a sadness wears; No murmurs cross my mind: Now God be thanked for these thick tears.

Which show, of those departed years, Sweet memories left behind!

XIII

Now God be thanked for years enwrought

With love which softens yet! Now God be thanked for every thought Which is so tender it hath caught Earth's guerdon of regret!

XIV

The earth may sadden, not remove, Our love divinely given; And e'en that mortal grief shall prove The immortality of love, And lead us nearer Heaven.

QUEEN ANNELIDA AND FALSE ARCITE

MODERNISED FROM CHAUCER (1841)

QUEEN ANNELIDA, AND FALSE ARCITE

O THOU fierce God of armies, Mars the red,

Who in thy frosty country called Thrace,

Within thy grisly temples full of dread, Art honoured as the patron of that place.

With the Bellona Pallas, full of grace! Be present; guide, sustain this song of mine,

Beginning which, I cry toward thy shrine.

11

For deep the hope is sunken in my mind,

In piteous-hearted English to indite This story old, which I in Latin find,

Of Queen Annelida and false Arcite:

Since Time, whose rust can all things fret and bite,

In fretting many a tale of equal fame, Hath from our memory nigh devoured this same.

TIT

Thy favour, Polyhymnia, also deign, Who, in thy sisters' green Parnassian glade,

By Helicon, not far from Cirrha's fane, Singest with voice memorial in the shade,

Under the laurel which can never fade;

Now grant my ship, that some smooth haven win her!

I follow Statius first, and then Corinna.

IV

When Theseus by a long and deathly war

The hardy Scythian race had overcome,

He, laurel-crownèd, in his goldwrought car,

Returning to his native city home, The blissful people for his pomp make room,

And throw their shouts up to the stars, and bring

The general heart out for his honouring.

v

Before the Duke, in sign of victory, The trumpets sound, and in his banner large

Dilates the figure of Mars—and men may see,

In token of glory, many a treasure charge,

Many a bright helm, and many a spear and targe,

Many a fresh knight, and many a blissful rout

On horse and foot, in all the field about.

V

Hippolyte, his wife, the heroic queen Of Scythia, conqueress though conquered,

With Emily, her youthful sister sheen, Fair in a car of gold he with him led. The ground about her car she overspread

With brightness from the beauty in her face,

Which smiled forth largesses of love and grace.

VII

Thus triumphing, and laurel-crowned thus,

In all the flower of Fortune's high providing,

I leave this noble prince, this Theseus, Toward the walls of Athens, bravely riding,—

And seek to bring in, without more abiding,

Something of that whereof I 'gan to write

Of fair Annelida and false Arcite.

VII

Fierce Mars, who in his furious course of ire,

The ancient wrath of Juno to fulfil, Had set the nations' mutual hearts on fire

In Thebes and Argos (so that each would kill

Either with bloody spears), grew never still—

But rushed now here, now there, among them both,

Till each was slain by each, they were so wroth.

IX

For when Parthenopæus and Tydeus Had perished with Hippomedon, alsò

Amphiaraus and proud Capaneus,— And when the wretched Theban brethren two

Were slain, and King Adrastus home did go-

So desolate stood Thebes, her halls so bare.

That no man's love could remedy his care.

₩.

And when the old man, Creon, 'gan espy

How darkly the blood royal was brought down,

He held the city in his tyranny,

And forced the nobles of that region To be his friends and dwell within the town: for fear.

Those princely persons yielded, and She thought she knew the heart which drew near .-

Among the rest the young Armenian queen.

Annelida, was in that city living.

She was as beauteous as the sun was

Her fame to distant lands such glory giving

That all men in the world had some heart-striving

To look on her. No woman, sooth, can be.

Though earth is rich in fairness, fair as she.

Young was this queen, but twenty summers old.

Of middle stature, and such wondrous beauty,

That Nature, self-delighted, did behold

A rare work in her-while, in steadfast

Lucretia and Penelope would suit ve With a worse model—all things understood.

She was, in short, most perfect fair and good.

The Theban knight eke, to give all their due.

Was young, and therewithal a lusty knight.

But he was double in love, and nothing true,

Ay, subtler in that craft than any

And with his cunning won this ladv bright;

So working on her simpleness of nature.

That she him trusted above every creature.

What shall I say? She loved Arcite

That if at any hour he parted from

Her heart seemed ready anon to burst in two;

Till half for love of him, and half For he with lowliness had overcome her:

did foredoom her.

But he was false, and all that softness feigning,-

I trow men need not learn such arts of paining.

And ne'ertheless full mickle business Had he, before he might his lady win.-

He swore that he should die of his distress.

His brain would madden with the fire within!

Alas, the while! for it was ruth and sin,

That she, sweet soul, upon his grief should rue;

But little reckon false hearts as the true.

And she to Arcite so subjected her. That all she did or had seemed his of right:

No creature in her house met smile or cheer.

Further than would be pleasant to Arcite:

There was no lack whereby she did despite

To his least will—for hers to his was bent,

And all things which pleased him made her content.

No kind of letter to her fair hands came.

Touching on love, from any kind of wight,

But him she showed it ere she burned the same:

So open was she, doing all she might.

That nothing should be hidden from her knight,

Lest he for any untruth should upbraid her.—

The slave of his unspoken will she made her.

XVIII

He played his jealous fancies over her. And if he heard that any other man straight to swear

To each word—or the speaker had To be in love as false as any can; his ban;

For fear; but all was fraud and Invented tents as well as bigamy. flattery,

Since without love he feigned jealousy.

XIX All which with so much sweetness suffered she,

Whate'er he willed she thought the wisest thing :

And evermore she loved him tenderly. And did him honour as he were a

Her heart was wedded to him with a

So eager to be faithful and intent, That wheresoe'er he wandered, there it went.

When she would eat he stole away her

thought, Till little thought for food, I ween, was kept;

And when a time for rest the midnight brought,

She always mused upon him till she slept,-

When he was absent, secretly she wept;

And thus lived Queen Annelida the

For false Arcite, who worked her this despair.

This false Arcite in his new-fangleness.

Because so gentle were her ways and true.

Took the less pleasure in her steadfastness.

And saw another lady proud and new,

And right anon he clad him in her hue ;

I know not whether white, or red, or green,

Betraying fair Annelida the Queen.

And yet it was no thing to wonder on, Thoughhe were false—It is the way | Her body, languishing in ceaseless of man

Spoke to her, would be seech her (Since Lamech was, who flourished years agone),

For he was the first father who began And out of her sweet wits she almost To love two; and I trow, indeed, that he

And having so betrayed her, false Arcite

Feign'd more, that primal wrong to justify.

A vicious horse will snort besides his bite:

And so he taunted her with treachery, Swearing he saw thro' her duplicity, And how she was not loving, but false-hearted-

The perjured traitor swore thus, and departed.

XXIV

Alas, alas, what heart could suffer it. For ruth, the story of her grief to tell ?

What thinker hath the cunning and the wit

To image it? what hearer, strength to dwell

A room's length off, while I rehearse the hell

Suffered by Queen Annelida the fair For false Arcite, who worked her this despair?

XXV

She weepeth, waileth, swooneth piteously:

She falleth on the earth dead as a stone:

Her graceful limbs are cramped convulsively;

She speaketh out wild, as her wits were gone.

No colour, but an ashen paleness none-

Touched cheek or lips; and no word shook their white.

But "Mercy, cruel heart! mine own Arcite!'

XXVI

Thus it continued, till she pined so. And grew so weak, her feet no more could bear

Whereof Arcite had neither ruth nor She set herself to fashion a comcare-

His heart had put out new-green shoots elsewhere;

to think,

And reckoned little, did she float or sink.

XXVII

His fine new lady kept him in such | The sword of sorrow, whetted sharp narrow

Strict limit, by the bridle, at the end O' the whip, he feared her least word as an arrow,-

Her threatening made him, as a bow, to bend,

And at her pleasure did he turn and wend:

Seeing she never granted to this lover A single grace he could sing "Ios"

XXVIII

She drove him forth-she scarcely deigned to know

That he was servant to her ladyship: But, lest he should be proud, she kept him low,

Nor paid his service from a smiling

She sent him now to land, and now to ship;

And giving him all danger to his fill, She thereby had him at her sovereign will.

XXIX

Be taught of this, ye prudent women all

Warn'd by Annelida and false Arcite; Because she chose, himself, "dear heart " to call

And be so meek, he loved her not

The nature of man's heart is to delight something strange-moreover (may Heaven save

The wrong'd), the thing they cannot, they would have.

XXX

Now turn we to Annelida again, Who pined day by day in languish-

ment. But when she saw no comfort met her

pain, Weeping once in a woeful uncon-

straint,

plaint.

Which with her own pale hand she 'gan to write.

Therefore he deigned not on her grief And sent it to her lover, to Arcite.

THE COMPLAINT OF ANNELIDA TO FALSE ARCITE

for me

On false delight, with point of memory Stabb'd so mine heart bliss-bare and black of hue.

That all to dread is turn'd my dance's glee.

My face's beauty to despondency-For nothing it availeth to be true— And, whoseever is so, she shall rue Obeying love, and cleaving faithfully Alway to one, and changing for no new.

I ought to know it well as any wight, For I loved one with all my heart and might.

More than myself a hundred-thousand fold,

And called him my heart's dear life, my knight,

And was all his, as far as it was right:

His gladness did my blitheness make of old,

And in his least disease my death was told;

Who, on his side, had plighted lovers' plight,

Me, evermore, his lady and love to hold.

Now is he false-alas, alas !-although

Unwronged! and acting such a ruthless part,

That with a little word he will not deign

To bring the peace back to my mournful heart.

Drawn in, and caught up by another's art, Right as he will, he laugheth at my

While I—I cannot my weak heart

restrain

From loving him—still, aye; yet none I know

To whom of all this grief I can complain.

IV

Shall I complain (ah, piteous and harsh sound!)

Unto my foe, who gave mine heart a wound,

And still desireth that the harm be more?

Now certes, if I sought the whole earth round,

No other help, no better leech were found!

My destiny hath shaped it so of yore—
I would not other medicine, nor yet lore.

I would be ever where I once was bound;

And what I said, would say for evermore.

v

Alas! and where is gone your gentillesse?

Where gone your pleasant words, your humbleness?

Where your devotion full of reverent fear,

Your patient loyalty, your busy address

To me, whom once you called nothing less

Than mistress, sovereign lady, i' the sphere

O' the world? Ah me! no word, no look of cheer,

Will you vouchsafe upon my heaviness!

Alas your love! I bought it all too dear.

VI

Now certes, sweet, howe'er you be The cause so, and so causelessly, Of this my mortal agony,

Your reason should amend the failing!

Your friend, your true love, do you

Who never in time nor yet degree Grieved you: so may the all-knowing He

Save my lorn soul from future wailing.

VI

Because I was so plain, Arcite, In all my doings, your delight, Seeking in all things, where I might In honour,—meek and kind and free;

Therefore you do me such despite.

Alas! howe'er through cruelty

My heart with sorrow's sword you smite,

You cannot kill its love.—Ah me!

Ah, my sweet foe, why-do you so For shame?

Think you that praise, in sooth, will raise

Your name.

Loving anew, and being untrue
For aye?

Thus casting down your manhood's crown

In blame, And working me adversity,

The same
Who loves you most—(O God, Thou know'st!)

Alway?
Yet turn again—be fair and plain

Some day;
And then shall this, that seems amiss,
Be game,

All being forgiv'n, while yet from heav'n

I stay.

ıx

Behold, dear heart, I write this to obtain

Some knowledge, whether I should pray or 'plain;

Which way is best to force you to be true?

For either I must have you in my chain,
Or you, sweet, with the death must

or you, sweet, with the death must part us twain;
There is no mean no other way more

There is no mean, no other way more new:

And, that Heaven's mercy on my soul may rue

And let you slay me outright with this pain,

The whiteness in my cheeks may prove to you.

X

For hitherto mine own death have I sought;

Myself I murder with my secret thought,
In sorrow and ruth of your unkind-

nesses!

I weep, I wail, I fast—all helpeth nought, I flee all joy (I mean the name of

aught).

I flee all company, all mirthfulness— Why, who can make her boast of more distress

Than I? To such a plight you have

me brought,

Guiltless (I need no witness) ne'ertheless.

XI

Shall I go pray and wail my woman-hood?

Compared to such a deed, death's self were good.

What! ask for mercy, and guiltless—where's the need?

And if I wailed my life so,—that you would

Care nothing, is less feared than understood:

And if mine oath of love I dared to plead

In mine excuse,—your scorn would be its meed.

Ah, love! it giveth flowers instead of seed—

Full long ago I might have taken heed.

XII

And though I had you back to-morrow again,

I might as well hold April from the rain As hold you to the vows you vowed me last.

Maker of all things, and truth's

sovereign,
Where is the truth of man, who hath
it slain,

That she who loveth him should find him fast

As in a tempest is a rotten mast? Is that a tame beast which is ever fain To flee us when restraint and fear are past?

XIII

Now mercy, sweet, if I mis-say;— Have I said aught is wrong to-day? I do not know—my wit's astray— I fare as doth the song of one who weepeth; For now I 'plain, and now I pray—I am so mazed, I die away—

Arcite, you have the key for aye
Of all my world, and all the good it
keepeth.

XIV

And in this world there is not one Who walketh with a sadder moan, And bears more grief than I have done;

And if light slumbers overcome me, Methinks your image, in the glory Of skyey azure, stands before me, Re-vowing the old love you bore me, And praying for new mercy from me.

χv

Through the long night, this won-drous sight,

Bear I,
Which haunteth still, the daylight,
till

I die: But nought of this, your heart, I wis,

Can reach.
Mine eyes down-pour, they never-

more Are dry,

While to your ruth, and eke your truth,

But, welladay, too far be they
To fetch.

Thus destiny is holding me—
Ah, wretch!

And when I fain would break the chain,

Faileth my wit (so weak is it)
With speech.

XVI

Therefore I end thus, since my hope is o'er—

I give all up both now and evermore; And in the balance ne'er again will lay My safety, nor be studious in love-lore. But like the swan who, as I heard of yore,

Singeth life's penance on his deathly day,

So I sing here my life and woes away,— Ay, how you, cruel Arcite, wounded sore,

With memory's point, your poor Annelida.

After Annelida, the woeful queen, Had written in her own hand in this

With ghastly face, less pale than white, I ween,

Shefella-swooning; then she 'gan arise,

And unto Mars voweth a sacrifice Within the temple, with a sorrowful bearing,

And in such phrase as meets your present hearing.

EXPLICIT

POEMS

(1844, 1850, 1853.)

A DRAMA OF EXILE

Scene.—The outer side of the gate of Eden shut fast with cloud, from the depth of which revolves a sword of fire selfmoved. Adam and Eve are seen in the distance flying along the glare.

Luciter (alone). Rejoice in the clefts of Gehenna.

My exiled, my host!

Earth has exiles as hopeless as when a Heaven's empire was lost.

Through the seams of her shaken foundations,

Smoke up in great joy!

With the smoke of your fierce exultations

Deform and destroy!

Smoke up with your lurid revenges, And darken the face

Of the white heavens, and taunt them with changes

From glory and grace.

We, in falling, while destiny strangles, Pull down with us all.

Let them look to the rest of their angels! Who's safe from a fall?

HE saves not. Where's Adam? Can pardon

Requicken that sod?

Unkinged is the King of the Garden, The image of God.

Other exiles are cast out of Eden,-More curse has been hurled!

Come up, O my locusts, and feed in The green of the world.

Come up! we have conquered by evil. Good reigns not alone.

I prevail now! and, angel or devil. Inherit a throne!

In sudden apparition a watch of innumerable Angels, rank above rank. slopes up from around the gate to the zenith.

The Angel Gabriel descends.

Luc. Hail Gabriel, the keeper of the gate!

Now that the fruit is plucked, prince Gabriel.

I hold that Eden is impregnable

Under thy keeping. Gab.

Angel of the sin. Such as thou standest, -pale in the drear light

Which rounds the rebel's work with Maker's wrath.—

Thou shalt be an Idea to all souls. A monumental melancholy gloom Seen down all ages, whence to mark despair

And measure out the distances from good!

Go from us straightway.

Luc. Wherefore? Gah Lucifer, Thy last step in this place, trod

sorrow up. Recoil before that sorrow, if not this

sword. Luc. Angels are in the world wherefore not I?

Exiles are in the world-wherefore not I?

The cursed are in the world—wherefore not I?

Gab. Depart.

Luc. And where's the logic of "depart"?

Our lady Eve had half been satisfied To obey her Maker, if I had not learnt To fix my postulate better. Dost thou dream

guarding some monopoly in Heaven

Instead of earth? Why, I can dream with thee

To the length of thy wings.

Gab. I do not dream. This is not Heaven, even in a dream: nor earth.

As earth was once, first breathed among the stars,

Articulate glory from the mouth di-

To which the myriad spheres thrilled audibly

Touched like a lute-string, and the sons of God

Said AMEN, singing it. I know that this

Is earth not new created but new cursed-

This, Eden's gate not opened but built up

With a final cloud of sunset. Do I dream?

Alas, not so! this is the Eden lost By Lucifer the serpent! this the sword (This sword alive with justice and with fire!)

That smote upon the forehead, Lucifer

The angel! Wherefore, angel, go-depart-

Enough is sinned and suffered.

By no means. Here's a brave earth to sin and suffer on!

It holds fast still-it cracks not under

It holds, like mine immortal. Presently

We'll sow it thick enough with graves as green

Or greener, certes, than its knowledgetree-

We'll have the cypress for the tree of life, More eminent for shadow :- for the

rest

We'll build it dark with towns and pyramids,

And temples, if it please you: we'll have feasts

And funerals also, merrymakes and

Till blood and wine shall mix and run along

Right o'er the edges. And good Gabriel,

(Ye like that word in Heaven!) I too have strength-

worship Him: Strength to fall from Him and not

cry on Him;

Strength to be in the universe and yet.

Neither God nor His servant. The red sign

Burnt on my forehead, which you taunt me with,

Is God's sign that it bows not unto God.

The potter's mark upon his work, to show

It rings well to the striker. I and the earth

Can bear more curse.

Gab. O miserable earth, O ruined angel!

Well! and if it be.

I CHOSE this ruin: I elected it Of my will, not of service. What I do. I do volitient, not obedient,

And overtop thy crown with my despair.

My sorrow crowns me. Get thee back to Heaven.

And leave me to the earth which is mine own

In virtue of her misery, as I hers In virtue of my ruin! turn from both That bright, impassive, passive angelhood,

And spare to read us backward any more

Of your spent hallelujahs.

Spirit of scorn! I might say, of unreason! I might say, That who despairs, acts; that who acts, connives

With God's relations set in time and space;

That who elects, assumes a something

Which God made possible; that who lives, obeys

The law of a Life-maker.

Let it pass! No more, thou Gabriel! What if I stand up

And strike my brow against the crystalline

Roofing the creatures,—shall I say for that,

My stature is too high for me to stand.

Strength to behold Him and not Henceforward I must sit? Sit thou. Gab. I kneel. Luc. A heavenly answer. Get

thee to thy Heaven,

And leave my earth to me.

Gab. Through Heaven and earth God's will moves freely; and I follow it.

As colour follows light. He overflows

The firmamental walls with deity, Therefore with love: His lightnings go abroad,

His pity may do so; His angels must,

Whene'er He gives them charges. Luc. Verily,

I and my demons—who are spirits of scorn—

Might hold this charge of standing with a sword

'Twixt man and his inheritance, as well

As the benignest angel of you all.

Gab. Thou speakest in the shadow
of the change

of thy change. If thou hadst gazed upon the face of

God
This morning for a moment, thou hadst known

That only pity fitly can chastise, While hate avenges.

Luc. As it is, I know Something of pity. When I reeled in Heaven.

And my sword grew too heavy for my grasp,

Stabbing through matter, which it could not pierce

So much as the first shell of,—toward the throne:

When I fell back, down,—staring up as I fell.—

The lightnings holding open my scathed lids.

And that thought of the infinite of God,

Hurled after to precipitate descent; When countless angel faces still and stern

Pressed out upon me from the level heavens

Adown the abysmal spaces, and I fell,

Trampled down by your stillness, and struck blind

By the sight in your eyes,—'twas then I knew

How ye could pity, my kind angelhood! Gab. Yet, thou discrowned one, by the truth in me

Which God keeps in me, I would give away

All—save that truth and His love over it,—

To lead thee home again into the light,

And hear thy voice chant with the morning stars

When their rays tremble round them with much song

Sung in more gladness!

Luc. Sing, my Morning Star! Last beautiful—last heavenly—that I loved!

If I could drench thy golden locks with tears,

What were it to this angel?

Gab. What Love is! And now I have named God.

Luc. Yet Gabriel, By the lie in me which I keep myself.

self,
Thou'rt a false swearer. Were it
otherwise.

What dost thou here, vouchsafing tender thoughts

To that earth-angel or earth-demon—which,

Thou and I have not solved his problem yet

Enough to argue,—that fallen Adam there,—

That red-clay and a breath! who must, forsooth,

Live in a new apocalypse of sense, With beauty and music waving in his trees

And running in his rivers, to make glad

His soul made perfect?—is it not for hope,

A hope within thee, deeper than thy truth,

Of finally conducting him and his
To fill the vacant thrones of me and
mine

Which affront Heaven with their vacuity?

Gab. Angel, there are no vacant thrones in Heaven

To suit thy empty words. Glory and life

Fulfil their own depletions; and if God

Sighed you far from Him, His next | Ere He created, -leave the earth to breath drew in

A compensative splendour up the vast, Flushing the starry arteries!

With a change! Luc. So. let the vacant thrones and gardens

Fill as may please you!-and be pitiful,

As ye translate that word, to the dethroned

And exiled, man or angel. The fact stands,-

That I, the rebel, the cast out and down.

Am here and will not go; while there, along

The light to which ye flash the desert

Flies your adopted Adam! your redclay

In two kinds, both being flawed. Why, what is this?

Whose work is this? Whose hand was in the work?

Against whose hand? In this last strife, methinks.

I am not a fallen angel!

Gab. Dost thou know Aught of those exiles?

Luc. Ay: I know they have fled Wordless all day along the wilder-

I know they wear, for burden on their backs.

The thought of a shut gate of Paradise, And faces of the marshalled cherubim

Shining against, not for them! and I know

They dare not look in one another's face.

As if each were a cherub!

Gab. Dost thou know Aught of their future?

Luc. Only as much as this: That evil will increase and multiply Without a benediction.

Gab. Nothing more? Why, so the angels taunt! What should be more?

Gab. God is more.

Luc. Proving what? Gab. That He is God, And capable of saving. Lucifer, I charge thee by the solitude He kept

God !

Luc. My foot is on the earth, firm as my sin!

I charge thee by the memory of Heaven

Ere any sin was done,-leave earth to God!

Luc. My sin is on the earth, to reign thereon.

Gab. I charge thee by the choral song we sang,

When up against the white shore of our feet.

The depths of the creation swelled and brake,-

And the new worlds, the beaded foam and flower

Of all that coil, roared outward into space

On thunder-edges,-leave the earth to God!

Luc. My woe is on the earth, to curse thereby.

Gab. I charge thee by that mournful Morning Star

Which trembles . . . Luc. Enough spoken.

As the pine In norland forest, drops its weight of

By a night's growth, so, growing toward my ends,

Idrop thy counsels. Farewell, Gabriel! Watch out thy service; I achieve my will.

And peradventure in the after years, When thoughtful men shall bend

their spacious brows Upon the storm and strife seen everywhere

To ruffle their smooth manhood and break up

With lurid lights of intermittent hope Their human fear and wrong,-they may discern

The heart of a lost angel in the earth.

CHORUS OF EDEN SPIRITS

(Chanting from Paradise, while ADAM and Eve fly across the Sword-glare)

HEARKEN, oh hearken! let your souls, behind you,

Turn, gently moved! Our voices feel along the Dread to find

O lost, beloved! Through the thick-shielded and strongmarshalled angels,

They press and pierce:

Our requiems follow fast on our evangels,-

Voice throbs in verse! We are but orphaned Spirits left in

A time ago,

God gave us golden cups, and we were bidden

To feed you so! But now our right hand hath no cup remaining,

No work to do,

The mystic hydromel is spilt, and staining

The whole earth through! Most ineradicable stains for showing (Not interfused!)

That brighter colours were the world's foregoing,

Than shall be used.

Hearken, oh hearken! ye shall hearken surely,

For years and years, The noise beside you, dripping coldly,

Of spirits' tears!

purely,

The yearning to a beautiful denied you,

Shall strain your powers; Ideal sweetnesses shall over-glide you,

Resumed from ours!

In all your music, our pathetic minor Your ears shall cross:

And all fair sights shall mind you of diviner, With sense of loss!

We shall be near, in all your poetlanguors

And wild extremes.

What time ye vex the desert with vain angers,

Or mock with dreams! And when upon you, weary after roaming,

Death's seal is put, By the foregone ye shall discern the coming,

Through eyelids shut.

Spirits of the Trees.

Hark! the Eden trees are stirring, Slow and solemn in your hearing!

Oak and linden, palm and fir, Tamarisk and juniper, Each still throbbing in vibration Since that crowning of creation When the God-breath spake abroad, "Let us make man like to God":-And the pine stood quivering As the awful word went by; Like a vibrant music-string Stretched from mountain-peak to sky! And the platan did expand, Slow and gradual, branch and head; And the cedar's strong black shade Fluttered brokenly and grand !-Grove and wood were swept aslant In emotion jubilant.

Voice of the same, but softer. Which divine impulsion cleaves In dim movements to the leaves Dropt and lifted, dropt and lifted In the sunlight greenly sifted,-In the sunlight and the moonlight Greenly sifted through the trees. Ever wave the Eden trees In the nightlight and the moonlight, With a ruffling of green branches Shaded off to resonances. Never stirred by rain or breeze!

Fare ye well, farewell! The sylvan sounds, no longer audible, Expire at Eden's door: Each footstep of your treading Treads out some murmur which ye heard before:

> Farewell! the trees of Eden Ye shall hear nevermore.

River-Spirits.

Hark! the flow of the four rivers-Hark the flow! How the silence round you shivers, While our voices through it go,

A softer voice.

Cold and clear.

Think a little, while ye hear,— Of the banks Where the willows and the deer Crowd in intermingled ranks, As if all would drink at once. Where the living water runs:-Of the fishes' golden edges Flashing in and out the sedges; Of the swans on silver thrones, Floating down the winding streams With impassive eyes turned shore-

And a chant of undertones,-And the lotos leaning forward To help them into dreams.

Fare ye well, farewell!

The river-sounds, no longer audible, Expire at Eden's door:

Each footstep of your treading Treads out some murmur which ve heard before.

Farewell! the streams of Eden Ye shall hear nevermore.

Bird-Spirit.

I am the nearest nightingale That singeth in Eden after you: And I am singing loud and true, And sweet,—I do not fail! I sit upon a cypress bough, Close to the gate, and I fling my

Over the gate and through the mail Of the warden angels marshalled

strong,-

Over the gate and after you! And the warden angels let it pass, Because the poor brown bird, alas! Sings in the garden, sweet and

And I build my song of high pure

Note over note, height over There is silence. ADAM and EVE fly on, height.

Till I strike the arch of the Infinite.

And I bridge abysmal agonies With strong, clear calms of harmonies.-

And something abides, and something floats,

In the song which I sing after you: Fare ye well, farewell!

The creature sounds, no longer audible, Expire at Eden's door:

Each footstep of your treading Treads out some cadence which ye heard before.

Farewell! the birds of Eden Ye shall hear nevermore.

Flower-Spirits.

We linger, we linger, The last of the throng! Like the tones of a singer Who loves his own song. We are spirit-aromas

Of blossom and bloom; We call your thoughts home as Ye breathe our perfume,— To the amaranth's splendour

Afire on the slopes:

To the lily-bells tender, And grev heliotropes:

To the poppy-plains keeping Such dream-breath and blee. That the angels there stepping

Grew whiter to see:

To the nook, set with moly, Ye jested one day in,

Till your smile waxed too holy, And left your lips praying:

To the rose in the bower-place, That-dripped o'er you sleeping; To the asphodel flower-place,

Ye walked ankle-deep in! We pluck at your raiment, We stroke down your hair,-

We faint in our lament, And pine into air.

Fare ye well, farewell!

The Eden scents, no longer sensible, Expire at Eden's door:

Each footstep of your treading Treads out some fragrance which ye knew before.

Farewell! the flowers of Eden Ye shall smell nevermore.

and never look back. Only a colossal shadow, as of the dark ANGEL passing quickly, is cast upon the Sword-glare.

Scene. - The extremity of the Sword-

Adam. Pausing a moment on this outer edge

Where the supernal sword-glare cuts in light

The dark exterior desert,—hast thou strength,

Beloved, to look behind us to the gate?

Eve. Have I not strength to look up to thy face?

Adam. We need be strong: you spectacle of cloud

Which seals the gate up to the final doom.

Is God's seal manifest. There seem to lie

A hundred thunders in it, dark and dead;

The unmolten lightnings vein it motionless:

And, outward from its depth, the selfmoved sword

Swings slow its awful gnomon of red fire

From side to side,—in pendulous horror slow,—

Across the stagnant, ghastly glare thrown flat

On the intermediate ground from that to this.

The angelic hosts, the archangelic pomps,

Thrones, dominations, princedoms, rank on rank,

Rising sublimely to the feet of God, On either side and overhead the gate,

Show like a glittering and sustained smoke

Drawn to an apex. That their faces shine

Betwixt the solemn clasping of their wings,

Clasped high to a silver point above their heads,—

We only guess from hence, and not discern.

Eve. Though we were near enough to see them shine,

The shadow on thy face were awfuller,

To me, at least,—to me—than all their light.

Adam. What is this, Eve? thou droppest heavily

In a heap earthward, and thy body heaves

Under the golden floodings of thine hair!

Eve. O Adam, Adam! by that name of Eve—

Thine Eve, thy life—which suits me little now,

Seeing that I confess myself thy death And thine undoer, as the snake was mine,—

I do adjure thee, put me straight away,

Together with my name. Sweet, punish me!

O Love, be just! and, ere we pass beyond

The light cast outward by the fiery sword.

Into the dark which earth must be to us,
Bruise my head with thy foot,—as

the curse said

My seed shall the first tempter's:

My seed shall the first tempter's: strike with curse,

As God struck in the garden! and as HE,
Being satisfied with justice and with

wrath,
Did roll His thunder gentler at the

close,—
Thou, peradventure, may'st at last

recoil
To some soft need of mercy. Strike.

my lord!

I, also, after tempting, writhe on the

ground; And I would feed on ashes from thine

hand, As suits me, O my tempted!

Adam. My beloved, Mine Eve and life—I have no other name

For thee or for the sun than what ye are,

My utter life and light! If we have fallen,

It is that we have sinned,—we: God is just:

And, since His curse doth comprehend us both

It must be that His balance holds the weights

Of first and last sin on a level. What! Shall I who had not virtue to stand straight

Among the hills of Eden, here assume To mend the justice of the perfect God.

By piling up a curse upon His curse, Against thee—thee—

Eve. For so, perchance, thy God Might take thee into grace for scorning me;

Thy wrath against the sinner giving proof

Of inward abrogation of the sin!

And so, the blessed angels might come
down

And walk with thee as erst,—I think they would,—

Because I was not near to make them sad,

Or soil the rustling of their innocence. Adam. They know me. I am deepest in the guilt,

If last in the transgression.

Eve. Thou!

Adam. If God, Who gave the right and joyaunce of

the world Both unto thee and me,—gave thee to

me,
The best gift last, the last sin was

the worst,

Which sinned against more complement of gifts

And grace of giving. God! I render back

Strong benediction and perpetual praise

From mortal feeble lips (as incense-smoke,

Out of a little censer, may fill Heaven), That Thou, in striking my benumbed hands

And forcing them to drop all other boons

Of beauty, and dominion, and delight,—

Hast left this well-beloved Eve—this

Within life—this best gift between their palms,

In gracious compensation!

Eve. Is it thy voice?
Or some saluting angel's—calling home

My feet into the garden?

Adam. O my God!

I, standing here between the glory
and the dark,—

The glory of Thy wrath projected forth

From Eden's wall, the dark of our distress

Which settles a step off in that drear world—

Lift up to Thee the hands from whence hath fallen

Only creation's sceptre,—thanking Thee

That rather Thou hast cast me out with her.

Than left me lorn of her in Paradise, With angel looks and angel songs around

To show the absence of her eyes and voice,

And make society full desertness

Without her use in comfort.

Eve. Where is loss? Am I in Eden? can another speak Mine own love's tongue?

Adam. Because with her, I stand Upright, as far as can be in this fall, And look away from Heaven, which doth accuse,

And look away from earth which doth convict,

Into her face, and crown my discrowned brow

Out of her love, and put the thought of her

Around me, for an Eden full of birds, And lift her body up—thus—to my heart.

And with my lips upon her lips,—thus, thus,—

Do quicken and sublimate my mortal breath,

Which cannot climb against the grave's steep sides
But overtops this grief!

Eve. I am renewed!

My eyes grow with the light which is in thine:

The silenceof my heart is full of sound. Hold me up—so! Because I comprehend

This human love, I shall not be afraid Of any human death; and yet because

I know this strength of love, I seem to know

Death's strength by that same sign. Kiss on my lips,

To shut the door close on my rising soul,—

Lest it pass outwards in astonishment, And leave thee lonely.

Adam. Yet thou liest, Eve, Bent heavily on thyself across mine arm,

Thy face flat to the sky.

Eve. Ay! and the tears Running, as it might seem, my life

from me,
They run so fast and warm. Let me
lie so.

And weep so,—as if in a dream or prayer,—

Unfastening, clasp by clasp, the hard, tight thought

Which clipped my heart and showed

me evermore

Loathed of thy justice as I loathe the snake,

And as the pure ones loathe our sin.
To-day.

All day, beloved, as we fled across This desolating radiance cast by swords

Not suns,—my lips prayed soundless to myself,

Striking against each other—O Lord God!

('Twas so I prayed), I ask Thee by my sin,

And by Thy curse, and by Thy blameless heavens,

Make dreadful haste to hide me from Thy face

And from the face of my beloved here For whom I am no helpmeet, quick away

Into the new dark mystery of death! I will lie still there, I will make no blaint,

I will not sigh, nor sob, nor speak a

Nor struggle to come back beneath the sun,

Where peradventure I might sin anew Against Thy mercy and his pleasure.

O death, whate'erit be, is good enough For such as I.—While for mine Adam

No voice shall say again in Heaven or earth,

"It is not good for him to be alone."

Adam. And was it good for such a prayer to pass,

My unkind Eve, betwixt our mutual lives?

If I am exiled, must I be bereaved?

Eve. 'Twas an ill prayer: it shall
be prayed no more:

And God did use it for a foolishness, Giving no answer. Now my heart has grown

Too high and strong for such a foolish prayer;

Love makes it strong: and since I was the first

In the transgression, with a steady foot I will be first to tread from this sword-

Into the outer darkness of the waste,—And thus I do it.

Adam. Thus I follow thee,

As erewhile in the sin.—What sounds! what sounds!

I feel a music which comes straight from Heaven,

As tender as a watering dew.

Eve. I think
That angels—not those guarding
Paradise.—

But the love-angels who came erst to us, And when we said "God," fainted unawares

Back from our mortal presence unto God

(As if He drew them inward in a breath),

His name being heard of them —I

His name being heard of them,—I think that they
With sliding voices lean from heavenly

towers,
Invisible, but gracious. Hark—how
soft!

CHORUS OF INVISIBLE ANGELS

Faint and tender.

Mortal man and woman,
Go upon your travel!
Heaven assist the Human
Smoothly to unravel
All that web of pain
Wherein ye are holden.
Do ye know our voices
Chapting down the Gold

Chanting down the Golden?

Do ye guess our choice is,

Being unbeholden,

To be hearkened by you yet again?

This pure door of opal God hath shut between us,— Us, His shining people,

You, who once have seen us And are blinded new! Yet, across the doorway,

Past the silence reaching, Farewells evermore may,

Blessing in the teaching, Glide from us to you.

First semichorus.

Think how erst your Eden,
Day on day succeeding,
With our presence glowed.

We came as if the Heavens were bowed

To a milder music rare!
Ye saw us in our solemn treading,
Treading down the steps of cloud,

While our wing, outspreading Double calms of whiteness, Dropped superfluous brightness Down from stair to stair.

Second semichorus.

Or oft, abrupt though tender,
While ye gazed on space,
We flashed our angel-splendour
In either human face!
With mystic lilies in our hands,
From the atmospheric bands
Breaking with a sudden grace,
We took you unaware!
While our feet struck glories

Outward, smooth and fair,

Which we stood on floorwise.

Platformed in mid air.

First semichorus.

Or oft, when Heaven descended, Stood we in your wondering sight In a mute apocalypse! With dumb vibrations on our lips, From hosannas ended; And grand half-vanishings Of the empyreal things, Within our eyes, belated: Till the heavenly Infinite Falling off from the Created, Left our inward contemplation Opening into ministration.

Chorus.

Then upon our axle turning
Of great joy to sympathy,
We sang out the morning,
Broadening up the sky—
Or we drew
Our music through
The noontide's hush and heat and

shine, Informed with our intense Divine— Interrupted vital notes Palpitating hither, thither,

Burning out into the æther,— Sensible like fiery motes!—

Or, whenever twilight drifted
Through the cedar masses,
The globed sun we lifted,
Trailing purple, trailing gold
Out between the passes
Of the mountains manifold,
To anthems slowly sung!
While he, aweary, half in swoon,
For joy to hear our climbing tune

Transpierce the stars' concentric rings,— The burden of his glory flung

In broken lights upon our wings.

[The chant dies away confusedly, and Lucifer appears.

Luc. Now may all fruits be pleasant to thy lips,

Beautiful Eve! The times have somewhat changed

Since thou and I had talk beneath a tree,

Albeit ye are not gods yet.

Eve. Adam! hold
My right hand strongly. It is
Lucifer—

And we have love to lose.

Adam. I' the name of God, Go apart from us, O thou Lucifer! And leave us to the desert thou hast made

Out of thy treason. Bring no serpentslime

Athwart this path kept holy to our tears,

Or we may curse thee with their bitterness.

Luc. Curse freely! curses thicken.
Why, this Eve

Who thought me once part worthy of her ear

And somewhat wiser than the other beasts,—

Drawing together her large globes of eyes,

The light of which is throbbing in and

The light of which is throbbing in and out

Their steadfast continuity of gaze,— Knots her fair eyebrows in so hard a knot,

And down from her white heights of womanhood,

Looks on me so amazed,—I scarce should fear

To wager such an apple as she plucked, Against one riper from the tree of life, That she could curse too—as a woman may—

Smooth in the vowels.

Eve. So—speak wickedly!

I like it best so. Let thy words be wounds.—

For, so, I shall not fear thy power to hurt:

Trench on the forms of good by open

For, so, I shall wax strong and grand with scorn.

Scorning myself for ever trusting thee As far as thinking, ere asnake atedust, He could speak wisdom.

Our new gods, it seems, Deal more in thunders than in courtesies:

And, sooth, mine own Olympus, which anon

I shall build up to loud-voiced imagery From all the wandering visions of the world,-

May show worse railing than our lady

Pours o'er the rounding of her argent

But why should this be? Adam pardoned Eve.

Adam. Adam loved Eve. Jehovah pardon both!

Eve. Adam forgave Eve-because loving Eve.

Luc. So, well. Yet Adam was undone of Eve.

As both were by the snake. Therefore forgive.

In like wise, fellow-temptress, the poor snake-

Who stung there, not so poorly! Aside.

Hold thy wrath. Beloved Adam! let me answer him; For this time he speaks truth, which we should hear,

And asks for mercy, which I most should grant,

In like wise, as he tells us-in like

And therefore I thee pardon, Lucifer, As freely as the streams of Eden flowed

When we were happy by them. So, depart:

Leave us to walk the remnant of our time

Out mildly in the desert. Do not seek

To harm us any more or scoff at us Or ere the dust be laid upon our face To find there the communion of the dust

And issue of the curse.-Go. At once, go.

Forgive ! and go! Ye images Luc. of clay,

Shrunk somewhat in the mould.what jest is this?

What words are these to use? what thought

Conceive ye of me? Yesterday-a snake!

To-day—what?

Adam. A strong spirit. A sad spirit. Eve.

Adam Perhaps a fallen angel.— Who shall say!

Luc. Who told thee, Adam? Thou! The prodigy Adam. Of thy vast brows and melancholy

eves Which comprehend the heights of some great fall.

I think that thou hast one day worn a crown

Under the eyes of God.

And why of God? Adam. It were no crown else. Verily, I think

Thou'rt fallen far. I had not yester-

Said it so surely; but I know to-day Grief by grief, sin by sin!

A crown, by a crown. Adam. Ay, mock me ! now I know more than I knew:

Now I know thou art fallen below hope Of final re-ascent.

Luc. Because?

Adam. Because A spirit who expected to see God, Though at the last point of a million years,

Could dare no mockery of a ruined man

Such as this Adam.

Luc. Who is high and bold— Be it said passing!—of a good red clay

Discovered on some top of Lebanon, Or haply of Aornus, beyond sweep Of the black eagle's wing! A furlong lower

Had made a meeker king for Eden. Soh!

Is it not possible, by sin and grief (To give the things your names) that spirits should rise

Instead of falling? Most impossible. Adam.

The Highest being the Holy and the Glad,

Whoever rises must approach delight And sanctity in the act.

Luc. Ha, my clay-king! Thou wilt not rule by wisdom very

long
The after generations. Earth, methinks,

Will disinherit thy philosophy

For a new doctrine suited to thine heirs,

And class these present dogmas with the rest

Of the old-world traditions—Eden fruits

And saurian fossils.

Eve. Speak no more with him, Beloved! it is not good to speak with him.

Go from us, Lucifer, and speak no more!

We have no pardon which thou dost not scorn,

Nor any bliss, thou seest, for coveting, Nor innocence for staining. Being bereft.

We would be alone.—Go.

Luc. Ah! ye talk the same, All of you—spirits and clay—go, and depart!

In Heaven they said so; and at Eden's gate,—

And here, reiterant, in the wilderness! None saith, "Stay with me, for thy face is fair!"

None saith, "Stay with me, for thy voice is sweet!"

And yet I was not fashioned out of clay.

Look on me, woman! Am I beautiful?

Eve. Thou hast a glorious darkness, Luc. Nothing more?

Eve. I think no more.

Luc. False Heart—thou thinkest more!

Thou canst not choose but think, as I praise God,

Unwillingly but fully, that I stand Most absolute in beauty. As yourselves

Were fashioned very good at best, so we

Sprang very beauteous from the creant Word

Which thrilled around us—God Himself being moved

When that august work of a perfect shape

His dignities of sovran angelhood,

Swept out into the universe,—divine With thunderous movements, earnest looks of gods,

And silver-solemn clash of cymbal wings!

Whereof was I, in motion and in form, A part not poorest. And yet,—yet, perhaps.

This beauty which I speak of, is not here,

As God's voice is not here, nor even my crown—

I do not know. What is this thought or thing

Which I call beauty? is it thought, or thing?

Is it a thought accepted for a thing?

Or both? or neither?—a pretext—a word?

Its meaning flutters in me like a flame Under my own breath: my perceptions reel

For evermore around it, and fall off, As if it too were holy.

Eve. Which it is.

Adam. The essence of all beauty,

1 call love.

The attribute, the evidence, and end, The consummation to the inward sense.

Of beauty apprehended from without, I still call love. As form, when colourless,

Is nothing to the eye,—that pine-tree there,

Without its black and green, being all a blank,—

So, without love, is beauty undiscerned

In man or angel. Angel! rather ask What love is in thee, what love moves to thee.

And what collateral love moves on with thee:

Then shalt thou know if thou art beautiful.

Luc. Love! what is love? I lose it. Beauty and love!

I darken to the image. Beauty— Love!

[He fades away, while a low music sound

Thou art pale, Eve. Adam. Eve. Down this colossal nature, dizzies

me-

And, hark! the starry harmony remote

Seems measuring the heights from whence he fell.

Adam. Think that we have not fallen so. By the hope

And aspiration, by the love and faith, We do exceed the stature of this angel. Eve. Happier we are than he is,

by the death!

Adam. Or rather, by the life of the Lord God!

How dim the angel grows, as if that

Of music swept him back into the dark.

[The music is stronger, gathering itself into uncertain articulation.

It throbs in on us like a plaintive heart,

Pressing, with slow pulsations, vibrative

Its gradual sweetness through the yielding air,

To such expression as the stars may

Most starry-sweet and strange! With every note

That grows more loud, the angel grows more dim,

Receding in proportion to approach, Until he stand afar,—a shade. Adam. Now, words.

SONG OF THE MORNING STAR TO LUCIFER

He fades utterly away and vanishes, as it proceeds.

Mine orbed image sinks Back from thee, back from thee, As thou art fallen, methinks,

Back from me, back from me. O my light-bearer, Could another fairer Lack to thee, lack to thee?

Ai, ai, Heosphoros! I loved thee with the fiery love of

Who love by burning, and by loving

love.

Ai, ai, Heosphoros! The precipice of ill Their brows flash fast on me from gliding cars.

Pale-passioned for my loss. Ai, ai, Heosphoros!

Mine orbed heats drop cold Down from thee, down from thee, As fell thy grace of old

Down from me, down from me.

O my light-bearer, Is another fairer

Won to thee, won to thee? Ah, ah, Heosphoros, Great love preceded loss,

Known to thee, known to thee. Ah, ah!

Thou, breathing thy communicable grace Of life into my light,

Mine astral faces, from thine angel face,

Hast inly fed.

And flooded me with radiance overmuch

From thy pure height. Ah, ah!

Thou, with calm, floating pinions both ways spread,

Erect, irradiated,

Didst sting my wheel of glory On, on before thee,

Along the Godlight, by a quickening touch!

Ha, ha! Around, around the firmamental ocean,

I swam expanding with delirious fire! Around, around, around, in blind desire

To be drawn upward to the Infinite— Ha, ha!

Until, the motion flinging out the motion

To a keen whirl of passion and avidity,-

To a blind whirl of rapture and delight,-

I wound in gyrant orbits, smooth and

With that intense rapidity! Around, around,

I wound and interwound, Too near the throned Jehovah not to While all the cyclic heavens about me spun!

Stars, planets, suns, and moons, dilated broad

Then flashed together into a single sun, And wound, and wound in one; And as they wound I wound,—around

around,
In a great fire I almost took for God!

Ha, ha, Heosphoros!

Thine angel glory sinks

Down from me, down from me— My beauty falls, methinks,

Down from thee, down from thee! O my light-bearer,

O my path-preparer,

Gone from me, gone from me! Ah, ah, Heosphoros!

I cannot kindle underneath the brow Of this new angel here, who is not Thou:

All things are altered since that time ago,—

And if I shine at eve, I shall not know!
I am strange—I am slow!
Ah, ah, Heosphoros!

Henceforward, human eyes of lovers be

The only sweetest sight that I shall see,

With tears between the looks raised up to me.

Ah, ah!

When, having wept all night, at break of day,

Above the folded hills they shall survey

My light, a little trembling, in the grey.

Ah, ah!

And gazing on me, such shall comprehend,

Through all my piteous pomp at morn or even,

And melancholy leaning out of Heaven, That love, their own divine, may change or end,

That love may close in loss! Ah, ah, Heosphoros!

Scene.—Farther on. A wild open country seen vaguely in the approaching night.

Adam. How doth the wide and melancholy earth

Gather her hills around us, grey and ghast,

And stare with blank significance of loss

Right in our faces! Is the wind up?

Eve. Nav.

Adam. And yet the cedars and the junipers

Rock slowly through the mist, without a sound;

And shapes which have no certainty of shape

Drift duskly in and out between the pines.

And loom along the edges of the hills, And lie flat, curdling in the open ground—

Shalows without a body, which contract

And lengthen as we gaze on them. Eve. O Life

Which is not man's nor angel's! What is this?

Adam. No cause for fear. The circle of God's life

Contains all life beside.

Eve. I think the earth
Is crazed with curse, and wanders
from the sense

Of those first laws affixed to form and space

Or ever she knew sin!

Adam. We will not fear: We were brave sinning.

Eve. Yea, I plucked the fruit With eyes upturned to Heaven, and

seeing there
Our god-thrones, as the tempter said,
—not God.

My heart, which beat then, sinks.
The sun hath sunk

Out of sight with our Eden.

Adam. Night is near.

Eve. And God's curse, nearest. Let us travel back,

And stand within the sword-glare till we die,

Believing it is better to meet death Than suffer desolation.

Adam. Nay, beloved! We must not pluck death from the Maker's hand.

As erst we plucked the apple: we must wait

Until He gives death as He gave us life.

Nor murmur faintly o'er the primal gift

Because we spoilt its sweetness with our sin.

Eve. Ah, ah! Dost thou discern what I behold?

Adam. I see all. How the spirits in thine eyes,

From their dilated orbits, bound before To meet the spectral Dread!

Eve. I am afraid—Ah, ah! The twilight bristles wild

with shapes Of intermittent motion, aspect vague And mystic bearings, which o'er-

creep the earth,

Keeping slow time with horrors in the blood.

How near they reach . . . and far!
How grey they move—

Treading upon the darkness without feet,—

And fluttering on the darkness without wings!

Some run like dogs, with noses to the ground;

Some keep one path, like sheep; some rock like trees;

Some glide like a fallen leaf; and some flow on,

Copious as rivers.

Adam. Some spring up like fire—And some coil . . .

Eve. Ah, ah! Dost thou pause to say

to say
Like what ?—coil like the serpent,
when he fell

From all the emerald splendour of his height,

And writhed,—and could not climb against the curse,

Not a ring's length. I am afraid—afraid—

I think it is God's will to make me afraid,—

Permitting THESE to haunt us in the place

Of His beloved angels—gone from us Because we are not pure. Dear Pity of God,

That didst permit the angels to go home

And live no more with us who are not pure,

Save us too from a loathly company—Almost as loathly in our eyes, perhaps, As we are in the purest! Pity us—Us too! nor shut us in the dark, away

From verity and from stability, Or what we name such through the

precedence Of earth's adjusted uses,—leave us

To doubt betwixt our senses and our souls.

Which are the most distraught and full of pain

And weak of apprehension.

Adam. Courage, Sweet!
The mystic shapes ebb back from us,
and drop

With slow concentric movement, each on each,—

Expressing wider spaces,—and collapsed

In lines more definite for imagery

And clearer for relation, till the
throng

Of shapeless spectra merge into a few

Distinguishable phantasms vague and grand

Which sweep out and around us vastily

And hold us in a circle and a calm. Eve. Strange phantasms of pale shadow! there are twelve.

Thou who didst name all lives, hast names for these?

Adam. Methinks this is the zodiac of the earth,
Which rounds us with its visionary

dread,— Responding with twelve shadowy

signs of earth,
In fantasque apposition and approach,

To those celestial, constellated twelve Which palpitate adown the silent nights

Under the pressure of the hand of God Stretched wide in benediction. At this hour,

Not a star pricketh the flat gloom of heaven!

But, girdling close our nether wilderness,

The zodiac-figures of the earth loom slow,—

Drawn out, as suiteth with the place and time,

In twelve colossal shades instead of stars,

Through which the ecliptic line of mystery

Strikes bleakly with an unrelenting scope.

Foreshowing life and death.

By dream or sense, Eve. Do we see this?

Adam. Our spirits have climbed high

By reason of the passion of our grief, -And, from the top of sense, looked over sense.

To the significance and heart of things Rather than things themselves.

And the dim twelve . . . Adam. Are dim exponents of the creature-life

As earth contains it. Gaze on them, beloved!

By stricter apprehension of the sight, Suggestions of the creatures shall assuage

Thy terror of the shadows :--what is known

Subduing the unknown and taming it From all prodigious dread. That phantasm, there,

Presents a lion,—albeit twenty times As large as any lion-with a roar

Set soundless in his vibratory jaws, And a strange horror stirring in his mane!

And, there, a pendulous shadow seems to weigh-

Good against ill, perchance; and there, a crab

Puts coldly out its gradual shadowclaws.

Like a slow blot that spreads,—till all the ground,

Crawled over by it, seems to crawl itself:

A bull stands horned here with gibbous glooms:

And a ram likewise! and a scorpion writhes

Its tail in ghastly slime and stings the dark!

This way a goat leaps with wild blank of beard:

And here, fantastic fishes duskly float,

Using the calm for waters, while their fins

Throb out slow rhythms along the shallow air!

While images more human— How he stands. That phantasm of a man-who is not thou!

Two phantasms of two men! Adam.

One that sustains, And one that strives!-resuming, so, the ends

Of manhood's curse of labour,1 Dost thou see

That phantasm of a woman?—

I have seen-But look off to those small humanities.2

Which draw me tenderly across my fear,-

Lesser and fainter than my womanhood

Or yet thy manhood—with strange innocence

Set in the misty lines of head and hand They lean together! I would gaze on

Longer and longer, till my watching eyes,-

As the stars do in watching anything,-

Should light them forward from their outline vague,

To clear configuration—

Two Spirits, of organic and inorganic nature, arise from the ground.

But what Shapes Rise up between usin the open space,— And thrust me into horror, back from hope!

Adam. Colossal Shapes—twin sovran images,-

With a disconsolate, blank majesty Set in their wondrous faces!—with no look.

And vet an aspect—a significance Of individual life and passionate ends, Which overcomes us gazing.

O bleak sound! O shadow of sound, O phantasm of thin sound!

How it comes, wheeling as the pale moth wheels.

1 Adam recognises in Aquarius, the waterbearer, and Sagittarius, the archer, distinct types of the man bearing and the man combating,the passive and active forms of human labour. I hope that the preceding zodiacal signs—transferred to the earthly shadow and representative purpose-of Aries, Taurus, Cancer, Leo, Libra, Scorpio, Capricornus, and Pisces, are sufficiently obvious to the reader.

2 Her maternal instinct is excited by Gemini.

Wheeling and wheeling in continuous wail

Around the cyclic zodiac, and gains force,

And gathers, settling coldly like a moth.

On the wan faces of these images We see before us; whereby modified, It draws a straight line of articulate song

From out that spiral faintness of lament—

And, by one voice, expresses many griefs.

First Spirit.

I am the spirit of the harmless earth! God spake me softly out among the stars,

As softly as a blessing of much worth,—

And then, His smile did follow un-

That all things, fashioned so for use and duty,

Might shine anointed with His chrism of beauty—

Yet I wail!

I drave on with the worlds exultingly, Obliquely down the Godlight's gradual fall—

Individual aspect and complexity

Of gyratory orb and interval

I ast in the fluent motion of deligh

Lost in the fluent motion of delight Toward the high ends of Being beyond sight—

Yet I wail!

Second Spirit.

I am the spirit of the harmless beasts, Of flying things, and creeping things, and swimming;

Of all the lives, erst set at silent feasts, That found the love-kiss on the goblet brimming

And tasted in each drop within the measure

The sweetest pleasure of their Lord's good pleasure—

Yet I wail!
Whata full hum of life, around His lips,
Bore witness to the fulness of creation!

How all the grand words were fullladen ships

Each sailing onward from enuncia-

To separate existence,—and each bearing

The creature's power of joying, hoping, fearing!— Yet I wail!

Eve. They wail, beloved! they speak of glory and God,

And they wail—wail. That burden of the song
Drops from it like its fruit, and

heavily falls

Into the lap of silence!

Adam. Hark, again!

First Spirit.

I was so beautiful, so beautiful,

My joy stood up within me bold to add

A word to God's,—and, when His work was full,

To "very good," responded "very glad!"

Filtered through roses, did the light enclose me, And bunches of the grape swam blue

across me— Yet I wail!

Second Spirit.

I bounded with my panthers! I rejoiced

In my young tumbling lions rolled together!

My stag, the river at his fetlocks, poised

Then dipped his antlers through the golden weather

In the same ripple which the alligator Left, in his joyous troubling of the water—

Yet I wail!

First Spirit.

O my deep waters, cataract and flood,—

What wordless triumph did your voices render!

O mountain-summits, where the angels stood,

And shook from head and wing thick dews of splendour!

How, with a holy quiet, did your Earthy

Accept that Heavenly—knowing ye were worthy!—

Yet I wail!

Second Spirit.

O my wild wood-dogs, with your listening eyes!

My horses—my ground-eagles, for swift fleeing!

My birds, with viewless wings of harmonies,—

My calm cold fishes of a silver being,—

How happy were ye, living and possessing.

O fair half-souls capacious of full blessing. Yet I wail!

First Spirit.

I wail, I wail! Now hear my charge to-day.

Thou man, thou woman, marked as the misdoers

By God's sword at your backs! I lent my clay

To make your bodies, which had grown more flowers:

And now, in change for what I lent, ye give me

The thorn to vex, the tempest-fire to cleave me-

And I wail!

Second Spirit.

I wail, I wail! Behold ye that I fasten

My sorrow's fang upon your souls dishonoured?

Accursed transgressors! down the steep ye hasten,-

Your crown's weight on the world, to drag it downward

Unto your ruin. Lo! my lions, scenting

The blood of wars, roar hoarse and unrelenting-And I wail!

First Spirit.

I wail, I wail! Do ye hear that I wail?

I had no part in your transgressionnone!

My roses on the bough did bud not pale-

My rivers did not loiter in the sun; I was obedient. Wherefore in my centre

Do I thrill at this curse of death and winter ?-And I wail!

Second Spirit.

I wail, I wail! I wail in the assault Of undeserved perdition, sorely wounded!

My nightingale sang sweet without a fault.

My gentle leopards innocently bounded:

We were obedient—what is this convulses

Our blameless life with pangs and fever-pulses ?-And I wail!

Eve. I choose God's thunder and His angels' swords

To die by, Adam, rather than such words.

Let us pass out, and flee. Adam. We cannot flee.

This zodiac of the creatures' cruelty Curls round us, like a river cold and drear.

And shuts us in, constraining us to hear.

First Spirit.

I feel your steps, O wandering sinners,

A sense of death to me, and undug graves !

The heart of earth, once calm, is trembling like

The ragged foam along the oceanwaves:

The restless earthquakes rock against each other ;-

The elements moan round me-' Mother, mother "__ And I wail!

Second Spirit.

Your melancholy looks do pierce me through:

Corruption swathes the paleness of your beauty.

Why have ye done this thing? What did we do

That we should fall from bliss as ye from duty?

Wild shrick the hawks, in waiting for their jesses,

Fierce howl the wolves along the wildernesses-And I wail!

Adam. To thee, the Spirit of the. harmless earthTo thee, the Spirit of earth's harmless lives-

inferior creatures but still innocent-Be salutation from a guilty mouth Yet worthy of some audience and re-

spect

From you who are not guilty. If we have sinned.

God hath rebuked us. Who is over us, To give rebuke or death, and if ye

Because of any suffering from our sin, Ye who are under and not over us. Be satisfied with God, if not with us, And pass out from our presence in such peace

As we have left you, to enjoy revenge Such as the Heavens have made you.

Verily,

There must be strife between us, large as sin.

Eve. No strife, mine Adam! Let us not stand high

Upon the wrong we did to reach dis-

Who rather should be humbler evermore.

Since self-made sadder. Adam! shall I speak-

I who spake once to such a bitter end— Shall I speak humbly now, who once was proud?

I, schooled by sin to more humility Than thou hast, O mine Adam, O my king-

My king, if not the world's?

Speak as thou wilt. Adam. Eve. Thus, then—my hand in thine-

. . . Sweet, dreadful Spirits! I pray you humbly in the name of God. Not to say of these tears, which are impure-

Grant me such pardoning grace as can go forth

From clean volitions toward a spotted will,

From the wronged to the wronger, this and no more:

I do not ask more. I am 'ware, in-

That absolute pardon is impossible From you to me, by reason of my sin,-

And that I cannot evermore, as once, With worthy acceptation of pure joy, It will not be amiss in you who kept:

Behold the trances of the holy hills Beneath the leaning stars, or watch the vales

Dew-pallid with their morning ecstasy,-

Or hear the winds make pastoral peace between

Two grassy uplands, -and the riverwells

Work out their bubbling lengths beneath the ground,-And all the birds sing, till for joy of

They lift their trembling wings as if

to heave The too-much weight of music from their heart

And float it up the aether! I am

That these things I can no more apprehend

With a pure organ into a full delight,— The sense of beauty and of melody

Being no more aided in me by the sense

personal adjustment to those Of heights

Of what I see well-formed or hear well-tuned.

But rather coupled darkly and made ashamed By my percipiency of sin and fall.

And humiliant melancholy Of thoughts.

But, oh! fair, dreadful Spirits—albeit Your accusation must confront my

soul, And your pathetic utterance and full

gaze

Must evermore subdue me, be con-

Conquer me gently—as if pitying me, Not to say loving! let my tears fall thick As watering dews of Eden, unre-

proached:

And when your tongues reprove me, make me smooth.

Not ruffled—smooth and still with your reproof,

And peradventure better, while more sad.

For look to it, sweet Spirits-look well to it-

The law of your own righteousness, And ruined, so, the sweetest friend I and keep

themselves,-

To pity me twice fallen,-from that, and this,-

From joy of place, and also right of Our God, Who is the enemy of none wail.-

"I wail" being not for me-only "I sin."

Look to it, O sweet Spirits!-

For was I not, At that last sunset seen in Paradise, When all the westering clouds flashed With unpermitted and extreme out in throngs

Of sudden angel-faces, face by face, All hushed and solemn, as a thought of God

Held them suspended,—was I not, that hour.

The lady of the world, princess of life, Mistress of feast and favour? Could

A rose with my white hand, but it became

Redder at once? Could I walk leisurely

Along our swarded garden, but the grass

Tracked me with greenness? Could I stand aside

A moment underneath a cornel-tree. But all the leaves did tremble as alive With songs of fifty birds who were made glad

Because I stood there? Could I turn to look

With these twain eyes of mine, now weeping fast.

Now good for only weeping,-upon

Angel, or beast, or bird, but each rejoiced

Because I looked on him? Alas, alas! And is not this much woe, to cry " alas!"

Speaking of joy? And is not this more shame,

To have made the woe myself, from all that joy?

To have stretched mine hand, and plucked it from the tree,

And chosen it for fruit? Nay, is not this

that bitter fruit,

have.

The right of your own griefs to mourn Turning the GREATEST to mine enemy?

I will not hear thee spea!: Adam. so. Hearken, Spirits!

But only of their sin, -hath set your hope

And my hope, in a promise, on this Head.

Show reverence, then,-and never bruise her more

reproach,-

Lest, passionate in anguish, she fling down

Beneath your trampling feet, God's gift to us

Of sovranty by reason and freewill, Sinning against the province of the Soul

To rule the soulless. Reverence her estate

And pass out from her presence with no words.

O dearest Heart, have patience with my heart!

O Spirits, have patience, 'stead of reverence,-

And let me speak; for, not being innocent.

It little doth become me to be proud; And I am prescient by the very hope And promise set upon me, that henceforth

Only my gentleness shall make me great.

My humbleness exalt me. Awful Spirits,

Be witness that I stand in your reproof

But one sun's length off from my happiness-

Happy, as I have said, to look around-

Clear to look up !—And now! I need not speak-

Ye see me what I am; ye scorn me

Because ye see me what I have made myself

From God's best making! Alas,peace foregone,-

Still most despair,-to have halved Love wronged, and virtue forfeit, and tears wept

Upon all, vainly! Alas, me! alas, Who have undone myself from all that best Fairest and sweetest, to this wretch-

edest

Saddest and most defiled—cast out. cast down-

What word metes absolute loss? let

absolute loss Suffice you for revenge. For I, who

lived

Beneath the wings of angels vesterday. Wander to-day beneath the roofless world!

the earth's empress I. reigning yesterday,

Put off from me, to-day, your hate with prayers!

I, yesterday, who answered the Lord God.

Composed and glad as singing-birds the sun.

Might shrick now from our dismal desert, "God,"

And hear Him make reply, "What is thy need.

Thou whom I cursed to-day?" Adam. Eve !

Eve. I, at last, Who yesterday was helpmate and delight

Unto mine Adam, am to-day the grief And cannot expiate for it. And curse-mete for him! And, so, pity us,

Ye gentle Spirits, and pardon him and me.

And let some tender peace, made of our pain,

Grow up betwixt us, as a tree might grow,

With boughs on both sides. In the shade of which,

When presently ye shall behold us That holdest sin and woe,—more dead,-

For the poor sake of our humility, Breathe out your pardon on our breathless lips,

And drop your twilight dews against our brows,

And stroking with mild airs our harmless hands

Left empty of all fruit, perceive your And could not see Him !--wretched love

Distilling through your pity over us. And suffer it, self-reconciled, to pass. LUCIFER vises in the circle.

Luc. Who talks here of a complement of grief?

Of expiation wrought by loss and fall?

Of hate subduable to pity? Eve? Take counsel from thy counsellor the snake,

And boast no more in grief, nor hope from pain,

My docile Eve! I teach you to despond. Who taught you disobedience. Look

around ;-Earth-spirits and phantasms hear

you talk, unmoved As if ve were red clay again and

talked! What are your words to them? your

griefs to them?

Your deaths, indeed, to them? Did the hand pause

For their sake, in the plucking of the fruit.

That they should pause for you, in hating you?

Or will your grief or death, as did your sin, Bring change upon their final doom?

Behold, Your grief is but your sin in the

rebound.

Adam. That is true. Luc. Ay, that is true. The clayking testifies

To the snake's counsel,—hear him ! very true.

Earth Spirits. I wail, I wail!

Luc. And certes, that is true. Ye wail, ye all wail. Peradventure I Could wail among you. O thou universe.

room for wail!

Distant starry voice. Ah, ah, Heosphoros! Heosphoros!

I wail, I wail! Earth Spirits. Adam. Mark Lucifer. He chan ges awfully.

Eve. It seems as if he looked from grief to God.

Lucifer!

Adam. How he stands—yet an angel!

Earth Spirits. I wail-wail! Luc. (after a pause). Dost thou remember, Adam, when the curse

Took us in Eden? On a mountainpeak

Half-sheathed in primal woods and glittering

In spasms of awful sunshine, at that hour

A lion couched,—part raised upon his paws,

With his calm, massive face turned full on thine,

And his mane listening. When the ended curse

Left silence in the world,—right suddenly

He sprang up rampant and stood straight and stiff,

As if the new reality of death

Were dashed against his eyes,—and roared so fierce

(Such thick carnivorous passion in his throat

Tearing a passage through the wrath and fear)—

And roared so wild, and smote from all the hills

Such fast, keen echoes crumbling down the vales

Precipitately,—that the forest beasts, One after one, did mutter a response In savage and in sorrowful complaint Which trailed along the gorges. Then, at once,

He fell back, and rolled crashing from

the height, Into the dusk of pines.

Adam. It might have been. I heard the curse alone.

Earth Spirits. I wail, I wail!
Luc. That lion is the type of what
I am!

And as he fixed thee with his full-faced hate,

And roared, O Adam, comprehending doom,

So, gazing on the face of the Unseen,

I cry out here between the Heavens and earth

My conscience of this sin, this woe, this wrath,

Which damn me to this depth.

Earth Spirits. I wail, I wail!

Eve. I wail—O God!

Luc. I scorn you that ye wail,

Who use your petty griefs for pedestals

To stand on, beckoning pity from without,

And deal in pathos of antithesis
Of what ye were forsooth, and what
ye are;—

I scorn you like an angel! Yet, one cry

I, too, would drive up like a column erect,

Marble to marble, from my heart to Heaven,

A monument of anguish to transpierce

And overtop your vapoury complaints Expressed from feeble woes!

Earth Spirits. I wail, I wail!
Luc. For, O ye Heavens, ye are
my witnesses,

That I, struck out from nature in a blot,

The outcast and the mildew of things good,

The leper of angels, the excepted dust Under the common rain of daily gifts,—

I the snake, I the tempter, I the cursed,—

To whom the highest and the lowest alike

Say, "Go from us—we have no need of thee,"—

Was made by God like others. Good and fair,

He did create me!—ask Him, if not fair!

Ask, if I caught not fair and silverly His blessing for chief angels on my head

Until it grew there, a crown crystallized!

Ask, if He never called me by my name,

Lucifer—kindly said as "Gabriel"— Lucifer—soft as "Michael!" while serene

I, standing in the glory of the lamps, Answered "my Father," innocent of

And of the sense of thunder. Ha ye think,

White angels in your niches,—I repent,—

And would tread down my own offences, back

To service at the footstool? That's read wrong!

I cry as the beast did, that I may cry-Expansive, not appealing! Fallen so deep

Against the sides of this prodigious I cry—cry—dashing out the hands of

wail.

On each side, to meet anguish everywhere,

And to attest it in the ecstasy And exaltation of a woe sustained Because provoked and chosen.

Pass along Your wilderness, vain mortals! Puny griefs

In transitory shapes, be henceforth dwarfed

To your own conscience, by the dread extremes

Of what I am and have been. If ye have fallen

It is a step's fall,—the whole ground beneath

Strewn woolly soft with promise! if ye have sinned,

Your prayers tread high as angels! if ye have grieved,

Ye are too mortal to be pitiable, The power to die disproves the right to grieve.

Go to! ye call this ruin? I half-scorn The ill I did you! Were ye wronged by me,

Hated and tempted, and undone of

Still, what's your hurt to mine of doing hurt,

Of hating, tempting, and so ruining? This sword's hilt is the sharpest, and cuts through

The hand that wields it.

Go-I curse you all. Hate one another—feebly—as ye can: I would not certes cut you short in hate-

Far be it from me! hate on as ye can! I breathe into your faces, spirits of

As wintry blast may breathe on wintry leaves,

And lifting up their brownness show beneath

The branches bare.—Beseech you. spirits, give

To Eve who beggarly entreats your love

For her and Adam when they shall be dead,

An answer rather fitting to the sin Than to the sorrow—as the Heavens, I trow.

For justice' sake, gave theirs.

I curse you both,

Say grace as after Adam and Eve! meat.

After my curses. May your tears fall hot On all the hissing scorns o' the crea-

tures here,-And yet rejoice. Increase and mul-

tiply, Ye and your generations, in all

plagues,

Corruptions, melancholies, poverties, And hideous forms of life and fears of death,-

The thought of death being alway eminent

Immovable and dreadful in your

And deafly and dumbly insignificant Of any hope beyond,—as death itself.—

Whichever of you lieth dead the first. — Shall seem to the survivor—yet reioice!

My curse catch at you strongly, body and soul.

And HE find no redemption—nor the wing

Of seraph move your way—and yet rejoice!

Rejoice,—because ye have not set in you

This hate which shall pursue you this fire-hate

Which glares without, because it burns within-

Which kills from ashes—this potential hate,

Wherein I, angel, in antagonism To God and His reflex beatitudes. Moan ever in the central universe

With the great woe of striving against Love-

And gasp for space amid the Infinite— And toss for rest amid the Desertness-Self-orphaned by my will, and selfelect

To kingship of resistant agony

Toward the Good 'round me-hating good and love,

And willing to hate good and to hate We are yet too high, O spirits, for

And willing to will on so evermore, Scorning the Past, and damning the To come-

Go and rejoice! I curse you! LUCIFER vanishes.

Earth Spirits.

And we scorn you! there's no pardon

Which can lean to you aright. When your bodies take the guerdon

Of the death-curse in our sight, Then the bee that hummeth lowest shall transcend you

Then we shall not move an eyelid Though the stars look down your eyes;

And the earth which ye defiled Shall expose you to the skies,— "Lo! these kings of ours—who sought to comprehend you."

First Spirit.

And the elements shall boldly All your dust to dust constrain! Unresistedly and coldly

I will smite you with my rain! From the slowest of my frosts is no receding.

Second Spirit.

And my little worm, appointed To assume a royal part,

He shall reign, crowned and anointed.

O'er the noble human heart! Give him counsel against losing of that Eden!

Adam. Do ye scorn us? Back vour scorn

Toward your faces grey and lorn, Thus I drive with passion strife; I who stand beneath God's sun, Made like God, and, though undone.

Not unmade for love and life. Lo! ye utter threats in vain! By my free will that chose sin, By mine agony within Round the passage of the fire,—

By the pinings which disclose

That my native soul is higher Than what it chose,-

your disdain.

Eve. Nav. beloved! If these be low.

We confront them with no height! We have stooped down to their

By infecting them with evil:

And their scorn that meets our blow

Scathes aright. Amen. Let it be so.

Earth Spirits.

We shall triumph—triumph greatly

When ye lie beneath the sward !

There, our lily shall grow stately Though yearswer not a word — And her fragrance shall be scornful of your silence;

While your throne ascending calmly

We, in heirdom of your soul, Flash the river, lift the palm-tree, The dilated ocean roll

With the thoughts that throbbed within you—round the islands.

Alp and torrent shall inherit Your significance of will;

With the grandeur of your spirit. Shall our broad savannahs

In our winds, your exultations shall

be springing! Even your parlance which inveigles.

By our rudeness shall be won; Hearts poetic in our eagle:

Shall beat up against the sun As the wind drives back the rain, And pour downward in articulate clear singing.

> Your bold speeches, our Behemoth

With his thunderous jaw shall wield!

Your high fancies, shall our Mammoth

Breathe sublimely up the shield

Of St. Michael, at God's throne, who waits to speed him!

Till the heaven's smoothgrooved thunder

Spinning back, shall leave them clear,

And the angels smiling wonder With dropt looks from sphere to sphere,

Shall cry, "Ho, ye heirs of Adam! ye exceed him!"

Adam. Root out thine eyes, sweet, from the dreary ground.

Beloved, we may be overcome by God, But not by these.

Eve. By God, perhaps, in these.

Adam. I think, not so. Had God
foredoomed despair,

He had not spoken hope. He may destroy.

Certes, but not deceive.

Eve: Behold this rose! I plucked it in our bower of Paradise This morning as I went forth, and my heart

Has beat against its petals all the day.

I thought it would be always red and full

As when I plucked it—Is it?—ye may see!

I cast it down to you that ye may see.
All of you!—count the petals lost of
it—

And note the colours fainted! ye may see!

And I am as it is, who yesterday Grew in the same place. O ye Spirits of earth!

I almost, from my miserable heart, Could here upbraid you for your cruel heart,

Which will not let me, down the slope of death,

Draw any of your pity after me, Or lie still in the quiet of your looks, As my flower, there, in mine.

[A bleak wind, quickened with indistinct human voices, spins around the earth-zodiac, filling the circle with its presence, and then wailing off into the east, carries the rose away with it. Eve falls upon her face. ADAM stands erect.

Adam. So, verily, The last departs.

Eve. So Memory follows Hope, And Life both. Love said to me, "Do not die."

And I replied, "O Love, I will not die. I exiled and I will not orphan Love." But now it is no choice of mine to die—My heart throbs from me.

Adam. Call it straightway back. Death's consummation crowns completed life,

Or comes too early. Hope being set on thee

For others, if for others, then for thee,—

For thee and me.

[The wind revolves from the east, and round again to the east, perfumed by the Eden-rose, and full of voices which sweep out into articulation as they pass.

Let thy soul shake its leaves,
To feel the mystic wind—Hark!

Eve. I hear life.

Infant voices passing in the wind.

O we live, O we live— And this life we receive, Is a warm thing and a new, Which we softly bud into

From the heart and from the brain,—

Something strange that overmuch is

Of the sound and of the sight, Flowing round in trickling touches,

With a sorrow and delight,—Yet is it all in vain?

Rock us softly,

Lest it be all in vain.

Youthful voices passing.

O we live, O we live—

And this life that we achieve

Is a loud thing and a bold,
Which with pulses manifold
Strikes the heart out full and
fain—

Active doer, noble liver, Strong to struggle, sure to conquer, •

Though the vessel's prow will quiver

At the lifting of the anchor: Yet do we strive in vain? Infant voices passing.

Rock us softly,

Lest it be all in vain.

Poet voices passing.

O we live, O we live— And this life that we conceive Is a clear thing and a fair, Which we set in crystal air

That its beauty may be plain: With a breathing and a flooding Of the heaven-life on the whole,

While we hear the forests budding
To the music of the soul—
Yet is it tuned in vain?

Infant voices passing.

Rock us softly,

Lest it be all in vain. Philosophic voices passing.

O we live, O we live—
And this life that we perceive,
Is a great thing and a grave,
Which for others' use we have,

Duty-laden to remain.
We are helpers, fellow-creatures,
Of the right against the

Of the right against the wrong,—
We are earnest hearted teachers

We are earnest-hearted teachers, Of the truth which maketh strong—

Yet do we teach in vain?

Infant voices passing.

Rock us softly, Lest it be all in vain.

Revel voices passing.

O we live, O we live— And this life that we reprieve, Is a low thing and a light, Which is jested out of sight, And made worthy of disdain! Strike with bold electric laughter

The high tops of things divine—
Turn thy head, my brother, after,
Lest thy tears fall in my
wine:—

For is all laughed in vain? Infant voices passing.

Rock us softly, Lest it be all in vain.

Eve. I hear a sound of life—of life like ours—

Of laughter and of wailing,—of grave speech,

Of little plaintive voices innocent,—
Of life in separate courses flowing out
Like our four rivers to some outward
main.

I hear life—life!

Adam. And, so, thy cheeks have snatched

Scarlet to paleness, and thine eyes drink fast

Of glory from full cups, and thy moist lips

Seem trembling, both of them, with earnest doubts

Whether to utter words or only smile.

Eve. Shall I be mother of the coming life?

Hear the steep generations, how they fall

Adown the visionary stairs of Time, Like supernatural thunders—far, yet near,—

Sowing the fiery echoes through the hills.

Am I a cloud to these—mother to these?

Earth Spirits. And bringer of the curse upon all these.

[Eve sinks down again.

Poet voices passing.

O we live, O we live—
And this life that we conceive,
Is a noble thing and high,
Which we climb up loftily
To view God without a stain;
Till, recoiling where the shade is,
We retread our steps again,
And descend to gloomy Hades

And descend to gloomy Hades
To resume man's mortal pain.
Shall it be climbed in vain?

Infant voices passing.

Rock us softly,

Lest it be all in vain.

Love voices passing.

O we live, O we live—
And this life we would retrieve,
Is a faithful thing apart
Which we love in, heart to heart,
Until one heart fitteth twain.

"Wilt thou be one with me?"

"I will be one with thee!"

"Ha, ha!—we love and live!"

"Ha, ha!—we love and live!'
Alas! ye love and die!
Shriek—who shall reply?
For is it not loved in vain?

Injant voices passing.

Rock us softly, Though it be all in vain. Aged voices passing.

O we live. O we live—

And this life we would survive, Is a gloomy thing and brief, Which, consummated in grief, Leaveth ashes for all gain-Is it not all in vain?

Infant voices passing. Rock us softly, Though it be all in vain. [Voices die away.

Earth Spirits. And bringer of the curse upon all these.

Eve. The voices of foreshown Humanity

Die off ;—so let me die.

So let us die. Adam. When God's will soundeth the right

hour of death. Earth Spirits. And bringer of the

curse upon all these. Eve. O spirits! by the gentleness

ve use In winds at night, and floating clouds at noon,-

In gliding waters under lily-leaves,— In chirp of crickets, and the settling hush

A bird makes in her nest with feet and wings,-

Fulfil your natures now!

Earth Spirits.

Agreed; allowed! We gather out our natures like a cloud,

And thus fulfil their lightnings! Thus, and thus! Hearken, O hearken to us!

First Spirit.

As the storm-wind blows bleakly in the norland,-

As the snow-wind beats blindly on the moorland,-

As the simoom drives wild across the desert,-

As the thunder roars deep in the Unmeasured,—

As the torrent tears an ocean-world

to atoms, -As the whirlpool grinds fathoms below fathoms,-

Thus,—and thus!

Second Spirit.

As the yellow toad, that spits its A mark for scorning—taunted and poison chilly,-

As the tiger, in the jungle crouching stilly,-

As the wild boar, with ragged tusks of anger,-

As the wolf-dog, with teeth of glittering clangour,-

As the vultures that scream against the thunder,-

As the owlets that sit and moan asunder,-

Thus,—and thus! Eve. Adam! God!

Adam. Cruel, unrelenting Spirits! By the power in me of the sovran soul Whose thoughts keep pace yet with the angels' march,

I charge you into silence—trample you Down to obedience.—I am king of vou!

Earth Spirits. Ha, ha! thou art king!

With a sin for a crown, And a soul undone! Thou, the antagonised, Tortured and agonised, Held in the ring Of the zodiac! Now, king, beware! We are many and strong Whom thou standest among,— And we press on the air, And we stifle thee back, And we multiply where

Thou wouldst trample us down From rights of our own To an utter wrong-And, from under the feet of thy scorn.

O forlorn! We shall spring up like corn, And our stubble be strong.

Adam. God, there is power in Thee! I make appeal Unto Thy kingship.

There is pity in THEE, Eve.O sinned against, great God!-My Seed, my Seed,

There is hope set on Thee—I cry to Thee,

Thou mystic seed that shalt be !leave us not

agony beyond what we can

Fallen in debasement below thunder-

perplext

By all these creatures we ruled yesterday.

Whom thou, Lord, rulest alway. O my Seed,

Through the tempestuous years that rain so thick

Betwixt my ghostly vision and Thy face,

Let me have token! for my soul is bruised

Before the serpent's head.

[A vision of CHRIST appears in the midst of the zodiac, which pales before the heavenly light. The Earth Spirits grow greyer and fainter.

CHRIST. I AM HERE!

Adam. This is God!—Curse us
not, God, any more.

Eve. But gazing so-so-with omnific eyes,

Lift my soul upward till it touch Thy feet!

Or lift it only,—not to seem too proud,—

To the low height of some good angel's feet,

For such to tread on, when he walketh straight

And Thy lips praise him.

CHRIST. Spirits of the earth, I meet you with rebuke for the reproach

And cruel and unmitigated blame Ye cast upon your masters. True, they have sinned:

And true, their sin is reckoned into loss

For you the sinless. Yet, your innocence

Which of you praises? since God made your acts

Inherent in your lives, and bound your hands

With instincts and imperious sanctities, From self-defacement? Which of

you disdains
These sinners who in falling proved

These sinners who in falling proved their height

Above you by their liberty to fall? And which of you complains of loss by them,

For whose delight and use ye have your life

And honour in creation? Ponder it! This regent and sublime Humanity

Though fallen, exceeds you! this shall film your sun,

Shall hunt your lightning to its lair of cloud,

Turn back your rivers, footpath all your seas,

Lay flat your forests, master with a look

Your lion at his fasting, and fetch down

Your eagle flying. Nay, without this law

Of mandom, ye would perish,—beast by beast

Devouring—tree by tree, with strangling roots

And trunks set tuskwise. Ye would gaze on God

With imperceptive blankness up the stars,

And mutter, "Why, God, hast Thou made us thus?"

And pining to a sallow idiocy

Stagger up blindly against the ends of life,

Then stagnate into rottenness and drop

Heavily—poor, dead matter—piecemeal down

The abysmal spaces—like a little stone Let fall to chaos. Therefore over you, Receive man's sceptre,—therefore be content

To minister with voluntary grace And melancholy pardon, every rite And function in you, to the human

Be ye to man as angels be to God, Servants in pleasure, singers of delight, Suggesters to his soul of higher things Than any of your highest. So at last.

He shall look round on you with lids too straight

To hold the grateful tears, and thank you well, And bless you when he prays his se-

And bless you when he prays his secret prayers,

And praise you when he sings his open songs

For the clear song-note he has learnt in you

Of purifying sweetness, and extend Across your head his golden fantasias Which glorify you into soul from

sense!

hand.

Go, serve him for such price. That not in vain

Nor yet ignobly ye shall serve, I place for act

In the name of To be hereafter. which

Perfect redemption and perpetual

I bless you through the hope and through the peace

Which are mine, -to the Love, which is myself.

Eve. Speak on still, Christ. Albeit Thou bless me not

In set words, I am blessed in hearkening Thee-

Speak, Christ.

Bless Speak, Adam. CHRIST. the woman, man-

It is thine office.

Adam. Mother of the world, Take heart before this Presence. Lo! my voice,

Which, naming erst the creatures, did express

(God breathing through my breath) the attributes

And instincts of each creature in its name.

Floats to the same afflatus.—floats and heaves

Like a water-weed that opens to a wave,-

A full-leaved prophecy affecting thee, Out fairly and wide. Henceforward, rise, aspire

To all the calms and magnanimities. The lofty uses and the noble ends.

The sanctified devotion and full work.

To which thou art elect for evermore. First woman, wife, and mother.

And first in sin. Adam. And also the sole bearer of the Seed

Whereby sin dieth! Raise the maiesties

Of thy disconsolate brows, O well-be-

And front with level eyelids the To

And all the dark o' the world. Rise. woman, rise

To thy peculiar and best altitudes Of doing good and of enduring ill,— Of comforting for ill, and teaching good,

And reconciling all that ill and good My word here for an oath, mine oath Unto the patience of a constant hope.

Rise with thy daughters! If sin came by thee,

And by sin, death,—the ransomrighteousness

The heavenly life and compensative

Shall come by means of thee. If woe by thee

Had issue to the world, thou shalt go forth

An angel of the woe thou didst achieve.

Found acceptable to the world in-

Of others of that name, of whose bright steps

Thy deed stripped bare the hills. Be satisfied:

Something thou hast to bear through womanhood.

Peculiar suffering answering to the sin,-

Some pang paid down for each new human life,

Some weariness in guarding such a life,

Some coldness from the guarded, some mistrust

From those thou hast too well served. from those beloved

Too lovally some treason, feebleness Within thy heart, and cruelty without,

And pressures of an alien tyranny With its dynastic reasons of larger

And stronger sinews. But, go to! thy love

Shall chant itself its own beatitudes. After its own life-working. A child's kiss

Set on thy sighing lips, shall make thee glad;

A poor man served by thee, shall make thee rich;

A sick man helped by thee, shall make thee strong;

Thou shalt be served thyself by every sense

Of service which thou renderest. Such a crown

I set upon thy head, -Christ witnessing

With looks of prompting love-to keep thee clear

Of all reproach against the sin foregone,

From all the generations which succeed.

Thy hand which plucked the apple, I clasp close,-

Thy lips which spake wrong counsel. I kiss close,—

I bless thee in the name of Paradise And by the memory of Edenic joys Forfeit and lost,-by that last cypress tree

Green at the gate, which thrilled as we came out,

And by the blessed nightingale which threw

Its melancholy music after us.-

And by the flowers, whose spirits full of smells

Did follow softly, plucking us behind

Back to the gradual banks and vernal bowers

And fourfold river-courses.—By all

I bless thee to the contraries of these — I bless thee to the desert and the thorns.

To the elemental change and turbulence,

And to the roar of the estranged beasts,

And to the solemn dignities of grief,— To each one of these ends, -and to their END

Of Death and the hereafter! Iaccept

For me and for my daughters this high part

Which lowly shall be counted. Noble

Shall hold me in the place of garden-

And in the place of Eden's lost delight Worthy endurance of permitted pain; While on my longest patience there shall wait

Death's speechless angel, smiling in the east

Whence cometh the cold wind. I bow myself

Humbly henceforward on the ill I did, A stern colossal image, with blind eyes

That humbleness may keep it in the shade.

Shall it be so? Shall I smile, saying so?

O Seed! O King! O God, Who shalt be Seed .-

What shall I say? As Eden's fountains swelled

Brightly betwixt their banks, so swells my soul

Betwixt Thy love and power!

And, sweetest thoughts Of foregone Eden! now, for the first time

Since God said "Adam," walking through the trees,

I dare to pluck you, as I plucked erewhile

The lily or pink, the rose or heliotrope, So pluck I you—so largely—with both hands,-

And throw you forward on the outer earth

Wherein we are cast out, to sweeten

Adam. As Thou, Christ, to illume it, holdest Heaven

Broadly above our heads.

[The CHRIST is gradually transfigured during the following phrases of dialogue, into humanity and suffering.

O Saviour Christ. Thou standest mute in glory, like the

Adam. We worship in Thy silence, Saviour Christ.

Eve. Thy brows grow grander with a forecast woe,---

Diviner, with the possible of Death! We worship in Thy sorrow, Saviour Christ.

Adam. How do Thy clear, still eyes transpierce our souls.

As gazing through them toward the Father-throne,

In a pathetical, full Deity,

Serenely as the stars gaze through the

Straight on each other.

O pathetic Christ. Thou standest mute in glory, like the moon.

CHRIST. Eternity stands alway fronting God;

And grand dim lips that murmur evermore

"God, God, God!" while the rush of life and death,

The roar of act and thought, of evil and good,

The avalanches of the ruining worlds Tolling down space,—the new worlds' genesis

Budding in fire,—the gradual humming growth

Of the ancient atoms and first forms of earth,

The slow procession of the swathing seas

And firmamental waters,—and the noise
Of the broad, fluent strata of pure

airs,—
All these flow onward in the intervals

Of that reiterant, solemn sound of—
Gop!

Which word, innumerous angels straightway lift

High on celestial altitudes of song

And choral adoration, and then drop The burden softly, shutting the last notes

In silver wings. How beit in the noon of time,

Eternity shall wax as dumb as Death,
While a new voice beneath the spheres

While a new voice beneath the spheres shall cry,

"God! why hast Thou forsaken Me,
My God?"

And not a voice in Heaven shall answer it.

[The transfiguration is complete in sadness.]
-Adam. Thy speech is of the

Heavenlies, yet, O Christ, Awfully human are Thy voice and

face!

Eve. My nature overcomes me

from Thine eyes.
CHRIST. In the set noon of time,

shall one from Heaven, An angel fresh from looking upon

God,
Descend before a woman, blessing her

With perfect benediction of pure love,

For all the world in all its elements, For all the creatures of earth, air, and sea,

For all men in the body and in the soul,

Unto all ends of glory and sanctity.

Eve. O pale, pathetic Christ—I worship Thee!

I thank Thee for that woman!
CHRIST. Then, at last.

I, wrapping round Me your humanity, Which, being sustained, shall neither break nor burn

Beneath the fire of Godhead, will tread earth,

And ransom you and it, and set strong peace Betwixt you and its creatures. With

Betwixt you and its creatures. With My pangs

I will confront your sins; and since those sins Have sunken to all Nature's heart

from yours,
The town of My close coul shall fall

The tears of My clean soul shall follow them

And set a holy passion to work clear

And set a holy passion to work clear Absolute consecration. In My brow Of kingly whiteness, shall be crowned anew

Your discrowned human nature.

Look on Me!

As I shall be uplifted on a cross

In darkness of eclipse and anguish dread,

So shall I lift up in My pierced hands, Not into dark, but light—not unto death.

But life,—beyond the reach of guilt and grief,

The whole creation. Henceforth in My name

Take courage O thou woman — man

Take courage, O thou woman,—man, take hope!

Your grave shall be as smooth as Eden's sward,

Beneath the steps of your prospective thoughts,

And, one step past it, a new Edengate

Shall open on a hinge of harmony, And let you through to mercy. Ye shall fall

No more, within that Eden, nor pass out

Any more from it. In which hope, move on,

First sinners and first mourners. Live and love,—

Doing both nobly, because lowlily !

Live and work, strongly,—because patiently!

And, for the deed of death, trust it to God

That it be well done, unrepented of,
And not to loss. And thence, with
constant prayers

Fasten your souls so high, that constantly

The smile of your heroic cheer may float

Above all floods of earthly agonies, Purification being the joy of pain!

[The vision of Christ vanishes. Adam and Eve stand in an ecstasy. The earth-zodiac pales away shade by shade, as the stars, star by star, shine out in the sky; and the following chant from the two Earth Spirits (as they sweep back into the zodiac and disappear with it) accompanies the process of change.

Earth Spirits.

By the mighty Word thus spoken Both for living and for dying, We, our homage-oath once broken,

Fasten back again in sighing; And the creatures and the elements renew their covenanting.

Here, forgive us all our scorning; Here, we promise milder duty. And the evening and the morning Shall re-organise in beauty

A Sabbath day in Sabbath joy, for universal chanting.

And if, still, this melancholy
May be strong to overcome us;
If this mortal and unholy,

We still fail to cast out from us.—

If we turn upon you, unaware, your own dark influences:—

If ye tremble when surrounded By our forest pine and palm trees,

If we cannot cure the wounded With our gum trees and our balm trees,

And if your souls all mournfully sit down among your senses,—

Yet, O mortals, do not fear us, We are gentle in our languor; And more good ye shall have near us,

Than any pain or anger;

And our God's refracted blessing, in our blessing shall be given!

By the desert's endless vigil, We will solemnise your passions; By the wheel of the black eagle

We will teach you exaltations, When he sails against the wind, to the white spot up in Heaven.

Ye shall find us tender nurses To your weariness of nature;

And our hands shall stroke the curse's

Dreary furrows from the creature,

Till your bodies shall lie smooth in death, and straight and slumberful:

Then, a couch we will provide you, Where no summer heats shall dazzle,

Strewing on you and beside you Thyme and rosemary and basil—

And the yew tree shall grow overhead to keep all safe and cool.

Till the Holy blood awaited
Shall be chrism around us running,

Whereby, newly consecrated, We shall leap up in God's sunning,

To join the spheric company where purer worlds assemble;

Ye shall brighten past the angels, Ye shall kneel to Christ victorious,

And the rays around His feet beneath your sobbing lips shall tremble.

[The phantastic vision has all passed; the earth-zodiac has broken like a belt, and is dissolved from the desert. The Earth Spirits vanish, and the stars shine out above.

CHORUS OF INVISIBLE ANGELS,

While ADAM and EVE advance into the desert, hand in hand.

Hear our heavenly promise
Through your mortal passion!
Love, ye shall have from us,
In a pure relation!

As a fish or bird Swims or flies, if moving, We, unseen, are heard To live on by loving. Far above the glances Of your eager eyes, Listen! we are loving! Listen, through man's ignorances-Listen, through God's mysteries-Listen down the heart of things, Ye shall hear our mystic wings Murmurous with loving!

Through the opal door Listen evermore How we live by loving.

First Semichorus. When your bodies therefore Reach the grave their goal, Softly will we care for Each enfranchised soul! Softly and unlothly, Through the door of opal Toward the Heavenly people,

Floated on a minor fine

Into the full chant divine. We will draw you smoothly,-While the human in the minor Makes the harmony diviner! Listen to our loving!

Second Semichorus. There, a sough of glory Shall breathe on you as you come, Ruffling round the doorway All the light of angeldom! From the empyrean centre Heavenly voices shall repeat. " Souls redeemed and pardoned, enter, For the chrism on you is sweet." And every angel in the place Lowlily shall bow his face, Folded fair on softened sounds. Because upon your hands and feet He images his Master's wounds! Listen to our loving! First Semichorus. So, in the universe's Consumniated undoing.

Our seraphs of white mercies Shall hover round the ruin! Their wings shall stream upon the flame As if incorporate of the same In elemental fusion,

And calm their faces shall burn out With a pale and mastering thought And a steadfast looking of desire From out between the clefts of fire.-While they cry, in the Holy's name. To the final Restitution!

Listen to our loving!

Second Semichorus.

So, when the day of God is To the thick graves accompted, Awaking the dead bodies

The angel of the trumpet Shall split and shatter the earth To the roots of the grave, Which never before were slackened. And quicken the charnel birth With his blast so clear and brave

Till the Dead shall start and stand

And every face of the burial-place Shall the awful, single look reflect. Wherewith he them awakened. Listen to our loving!

First Semichorus. But wild is the horse of Death! He will leap up wild at the clamour Above and beneath: And where is his Tamer

On that last day, When he crieth, "Ha, ha!" To the trumpet's blare. And paweth the earth's Aceldama?

When he tosseth his head. The drear-white steed.

And ghastily champeth the last moon-ray,-What angel there

Can lead him away, That the living may rule for the Dead? Second Semichorus.

Yet a Tamer shall be found! One more bright than seraph crowned, And more strong than cherub bold. Elder, too, than angel old,

By His grey eternities! He shall master and surprise The steed of Death,

For He is strong, and He is fain. He shall quell him with a breath, And shall lead him where He will, With a whisper in the ear. Full of fear-

And a hand upon the mane. Grand and still.

First Semichorus. Through the flats of Hades where the souls assemble

He will guide the Death-steed calm Meek as lamb at pasture—bloodless between their ranks.

While, like beaten dogs, they a little moan and tremble

To see the darkness curdle from the horse's glittering flanks.

Through the flats of Hades where the dreary shade is.-

Up the steep of Heaven, will the Tamer guide the steed .-

Up the spheric circles—circle above circle.

We who count the ages, shall count the tolling tread—

Every hoof-fall striking a blinder, blanker sparkle

From the stony orbs, which shall show as they were dead.

Second Semichorus.

All the way the Death-steed with tolling hoofs shall travel.

Ashen grey the planets shall be motionless as stones,

Loosely shall the systems eject their parts coeval,-

Stagnant in the spaces, shall float the pallid moons;

Suns that touch their apogees, reeling from their level,

Shall run back on their axles, in wild, low, broken tunes.

Charus.

Up against the arches of the crystal ceiling,

Shall the horse's nostrils steam the blurting breath;

Up between the angels pale with silent feeling,

Will the Tamer, calmly, lead the horse of Death.

Semichorus.

Cleaving all that silence, cleaving all that glory,

Will the Tamer lead him straightway to the Throne;

"Look out, O Jehovah, to this I bring before Thee

With a hand nail-piercèd,—I, who am Thy Son."

Then the Eye Divinest, from the Deepest, flaming,

On the mystic courser, shall look out in fire!

Blind the beast shall stagger where It overcame him,—

in desire-

Down the beast shall shiver,—slain amid the taming,-

And by Life essential, the phantasm Death expire.

Chorus.

Listen, man, through life and death, Through the dust and through the breath.

Listen down the heart of things! Ye shall hear our mystic wings Murmurous with loving!

A Voice. Gabriel, th'u Gabriel! Another Voice. What wouldst thou with me?

First Voice, I heard the voice sound in the angels' song, And I would give thee question.

Second Voice. Question me. First Voice. Why have I called thrice to my Morning Star

And had no answer? All the stars are out.

And answer in their places. Only in

I cast my voice against the outer rays Of my Star, shut in light behind the sun!

No more reply than from a breaking string.

Breaking when touched. Or is she not my star?

Where is my Star—my Star? Have ve cast down

Her glory like my glory? Has she waxed

Mortal, like Adam? Has she learnt to hate

Like any angel?

She is sad for thee. Second Voice. All things grow sadder to thee, one by one,

Angel Chorus.

Live, work on, O Earthy! By the Actual's tension Speed the arrow worthy

Of a pure ascension. From the low earth round you. Reach the heights above you:

From the stripes that wound you, Seek the loves that love you! God's divinest burneth plain

Through the crystal diaphane Of our loves that love you! First Voice. Gabriel, O Gabriel! Second Voice. What wouldst thou with me?

First Voice. Is it true, O thou Gabriel, that the crown

Of sorrow which I claimed, cnother claims?

That He claims that too?

Second Voice. Lost one, it is true.

First Voice. That He will be an exile from His Heaven,

To lead those exiles homeward?

Second Voice. It is true.

First Voice. That HE will be an exile by His will,

As I by mine election?

Second Voice. It is true.

First Voice. That I shall stand

sole exile finally,— Made desolate for fruition?

Second Voice. It is true. First Voice. Gabriel!

Second Voice. I hearken, First Voice. Is it true besides— Aright true—that mine orient Star

will give
Her name of "Bright and Morning
Star" to Him.—

And take the fairness of His virtue back.

To cover loss and sadness?

Second Voice. It is true.

First Voice. Untrue, Untrue!

O Morning-Star! O Mine!

Who sittest secret in a veil of light

Far up the starry spaces, say—Untrue!

Speak but so loud as doth a wasted moon

To Tyrrhene waters! I am Lucifer—
[A pause. Silence in the stars.

All things grow sadder to me, one by one.

Angel Chorus.

Exiled human creatures,
Let your hope grow larger!
Larger grows the vision
Of the new delight.
From this chain of Nature's
God is the Discharger,
And the Actual's prison
Opens to your sight.

Semichorus.
Calm the stars and golden
In a light exceeding:

What their rays have measured, Let your hearts fulfil! These are stars beholden By your eyes in Eden; Yet, across the desert, See them shining still.

Chorus.

Future joy and far light
Working such relations,—
Hear us singing gently—
Exiled is not lost!
God, above the starlight,

God, above the patience, Shall at last present ye Guerdons worth the cost.

Patiently enduring,
Painfully surrounded,
Listen how we love you—
Hope the uttermost—

Hope the uttermost—
Waiting for that curing
Which exalts the wounded,
Hear us sing above you—

Hear us sing above you— EXILED, BUT NOT LOST!

[The stars shine on brightly, while ADAM and Eva pursue their way into the far wildeness. There is a sound through the silence, as of the falling tears of an angel.

SONNETS

(1844)

THE SOUL'S EXPRESSION

WITH stammering lips and insufficient sound,

I strive and struggle to deliver right
That music of my nature, day and
night

With dream and thought and feeling, interwound,

And inly answering all the senses round

With octaves of a mystic depth and

With octaves of a mystic depth and height,

Which step out grandly to the infinite From the dark edges of the sensual ground!

This song of soul I struggle to outbear

Through portals of the sense, sublime and whole,

And utter all myself into the air: But if I did it,—as the thunder-roll

Breaks its own cloud,—my flesh would perish there,
Before that dread apocalypse of soul.

THE SERAPH AND POET

THE scraph sings before the manifest God-one, and in the burning of the Seven.

And with the full life of consummate Heaven

Heaving beneath him like a mother's breast

Warm with her first-born's slumber in that nest!

The poet sings upon the earth graveriven,

Before the naughty world soon selfforgiven

For wronging him, -and in the darkness prest

From his own soul by worldly weights. Even so,

Sing, seraph with the glory! Heaven is high.

Sing, poet with the sorrow! Earth is low.

The universe's inward voices cry

"Amen" to either song of joy and

Sing, seraph,—poet,—sing on equally.

ON A PORTRAIT OF WORDS-WORTH BY B. R. HAYDON

Wordsworth upon Helvellyn! Let the cloud

Ebb audibly along the mountainwind,

Then break against the rock, and show behind

The lowland valleys floating up to crowd

The sense with beauty. He, with forehead bowed

And humble-lidded eyes, as one inclined

Before the sovran thought of his own mind,

And very meek with inspirations proud,-

Takes here his rightful place as poet-

By the high-altar, singing prayer and prayer

To the higher Heavens. A noble My heart is very tired-my strength vision free,

Our Haydon's hand hath flung out My hands are full of blossoms plucked from the mist!

This is the poet and his poetry.

PAST AND FUTURE

My future will not copy fair my past On any leaf but Heaven's. Be fully done.

Supernal Will! I would not fain be one

Who, satisfying thirst and breaking fast

Upon the fulness of the heart, at last Says no grace after meat. My wine has run

Indeed out of my cup, and there is none

To gather up the bread of my repast Scattered and trampled; -yet I find some good

In earth's green herbs, and streams that bubble up

Clear from the darkling ground,content until

I sit with angels before better food. Dear Christ I when Thy new vintage fills my cup,

This hand shall shake no more, nor that wine spill.

IRREPARABLENESS

I HAVE been in the meadows all the day

And gathered there the nosegay that you see,

Singing within myself as bird or bee When such do field-work on a morn of

But now I look upon my flowers,decay

Has met them in my hands more fatally,

Because more warmly clasped,-and sobs are free

To come instead of songs. What do you say,

Sweet counsellors, dear friends? that I should go

Back straightway to the fields, and gather more?

Another, sooth, may do it,-but not T!

is low-

before,

No portrait this, with Academic air- Held dead within them till myself shall die,

TEARS

THANK God, bless God, all ye who suffer not

More grief than ye can weep for.

That is well—

That is light grieving! lighter, none befell,

Since Adam forfeited the primal lot.
Tears! what are tears? The babe
weeps in its cot,

The mother singing,—at her marriagebell,

The bride weeps,—and before the oracle

Of high-faned hills, the poet has for-

That moisture on his cheeks. Thank God for grace,

Ye who weep only! Though, as some have done,

Ye grope tear-blinded, in a desert place,

And touch but tombs,—look up!
Those tears will run

Soon, in long rivers, down the lifted face,

And leave the vision clear for stars and sun.

GRIEF

I TELL you, hopeless grief is passionless—

That only men incredulous of despair, Half-taught in anguish, through the midnight air

Beat upward to God's throne in loud I access

Of shricking and reproach. Full desertness

In souls, as countries, lieth silentbare

Under the blanching, vertical eye-

Of the absolute Heavens, Deephearted man! express

Grief for thy Dead in silence like to death,—

Most like a monumental statue set In everlasting watch and moveless woe.

Till itself crumble to the dust beneath.

Touch it: the marble eyelids are not wet—

If it could weep, it could arise and go.

SUBSTITUTION

When some beloved voice, that was to you

Both sound and sweetness, faileth suddenly,

And silence against which you dare not cry,

Aches round you like a strong disease and new—

What hope? what help? what music will undo

That silence to your sense? Not

That silence to your sense? Not friendship's sigh—

Not reason's subtle count. Not melody
Of viols, nor of pipes that Faunus

blew—
Not songs of poets, nor of nightin-

gales,
Whose hearts leap upward through

the cypress trees
To the clear moon! nor yet the spheric

laws
Self-chanted,—nor the angels' sweet

"All hails,"
Met in the smile of God. Nay, none

of these. Speak Тнои, availing Christ!—and fill this pause.

COMFORT

SPEAK low to me, my Saviour, low and sweet

From out the hallelujahs, sweet and low,

Lest I should fear and fall, and miss
Thee so

Who art not missed by any that entreat.

Speak to me as to Mary at Thy feet—And if no precious gums my hands bestow,

Let my tears drop like amber, while I go

In reach of Thy divinest voice complete

In humanest affection—thus, in sooth, To lose the sense of losing! As a child,

Whose song-bird seeks the wood for evermore,

Is sung to in its stead by mother's mouth,—

Till, sinking on her breast, lovereconciled, He sleeps the faster that he went before.

PERPLEXED MUSIC

AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED TO E. I. EXPERIENCE, like a pale musician,

holds

A dulcimer of patience in his hand : Whence harmonies we cannot under-

Of God's will in His worlds, the strain unfolds

In sad, perplexed minors. Deathly colds

Fall on us while we hear and countermand

Our sanguine heart back from the fancy-land,

With nightingales in visionary wolds. We murmur,-" Where is any certain

Or measured music, in such notes as these?"-

But angels, leaning from the golden Are not so minded! their fine ear hath

won The issue of completed cadences,-

And, smiling down the stars, they whisper-Sweet.

WORK

What are we set on earth for? to toil-

Nor seek to leave thy tending of the

For all the heat o' the day, till it declines.

And Death's mild curfew shall from work assoil.

God did anoint thee with His odorous To wrestle, not to reign; and He

assigns All thy tears over, like pure crystal-

lines. For younger fellow-workers of the

To wear for amulets. So others shall Take patience, labour, to their heart

and hand, From thy hand, and thy heart, and thy brave cheer.

And God's grace fructify through thee By help of having loved a little and to all.

The least flower, with a brimming cup, may stand.

And share its dew-drop with another near.

FUTURITY

AND, O beloved voices, upon which Ours passionately call, because erelong

Ye brake off in the middle of that

We sang together softly, to enrich

The poor world with the sense of love, and witch

The heart out of things evil,-I am strong.

Knowing ye are not lost for ave among

The hills, with last year's thrush. God keeps a niche In Heaven, to hold our idols: and

albeit He brake them to our faces, and

denied That our close kisses should impair their white .-

I know we shall behold them raised. complete,-

The dust swept from their beauty,glorified

New Memnons singing in the great God-light.

THE TWO SAYINGS

Two sayings of the Holy Scriptures beat

Like pulses in the church's brow and breast!

And by them, we find rest in our un-

And heart-deep in salt tears, do you entreat

God's fellowship, as if on Heavenly

The first is Tesus wept,—whereon is prest Full many a sobbing face that drops

its best And sweetest waters on the record

And one is, where the Christ denied and scorned

LOOKED UPON PETER. Oh, to render plain.

mourned,-

That look of sovran love and sovran

Which HE Who could not sin yet suffered, turned

On him who could reject but not sustain!

THE LOOK

THE Saviour looked on Peter. Ay, no word-

No gesture of reproach! The Heavens serene.

Though heavy with armed justice, did not lean

Their thunders that way. The forsaken Lord

Looked only, on the traitor. None record What that look was: none guess!

even those who have seen Wronged lovers loving through a

death-pang keen. Or pale-cheeked martyrs smiling to a

Have missed Jehovah at the judg-

ment-call. And Peter, from the height of blasphemy-

"I never knew this man "-did quail and fall.

As knowing straight THAT GOD,—and turnèd free

And went out speechless from the face of all.

And filled the silence, weeping bitterly.

THE MEANING OF THE LOOK

I THINK that look of Christ might seem to say-

"Thou Peter! art thou then a common stone

Which I at last must break My heart upon, For all God's charge to His high

angels may Guard My foot better? Did I ves-

terdav Wash thy feet, My beloved, that they

should run Quick to deny Me 'neath the morning

sun?-And do thy kisses, like the rest, betray?-

The cock crows coldly.—Go, and Out to a perfect thread. I hence manifest

A late contrition, but no bootless fear ! For when thy final need is dreariest.

Thou shalt not be denied, as I am here-

My voice, to God and angels, shall attest,—

Because I know this man, let him be clear."

A THOUGHT FOR A LONELY DEATH-BED

INSCRIBED TO MY FRIEND E. C.

IF God compel thee to this destiny, To die alone,—with none beside thy

To ruffle round with sobs thy last word said.

And mark with tears the pulses ebb from thee,—

Then pray alone—"O Christ, come tenderly!

By Thy forsaken Sonship in the red Drear wine-press,—by the wilderness outspread,-

And the lone garden where Thine

Fell bloody from Thy brow,—by all of

Permitted desolations, comfort mine! No earthly friend being near me, interpose

No deathly angel 'twixt my face and Thine.

But stoop Thyself to gather my life's

And smile away my mortal to Divine."

WORK AND CONTEMPLATION

The woman singeth at her spinningwheel

A pleasant chant, ballad, or barcarole. She thinketh of her song, upon the whole,

Far more than of her flax; and yet the reel

Is full, and artfully her fingers feel With quick adjustment, provident control,

The lines too subtly twisted to unroll,

appeal

we may do

Our Father's business in these tem- Some plait between the browsples mirk,

Thus, swift and steadfast,—thus, intent and strong;

While, thus, apart from toil, our souls pursue

Some high, calm, spheric tune, and What I say, who bear calmly all the prove our work

The better for the sweetness of our song.

PAIN IN PLEASURE

A THOUGHT lay like a flower upon mine heart,

And drew around it other thoughts like bees

For multitude and thirst of sweetnesses,-

Whereat rejoicing, I desired the art Of the Greek whistler, who to wharf and mart

Could lure those insect swarms from orange-trees,

That I might hive with me such thoughts, and please

My soul so, always. Foolish counterpart

Of a weak man's vain wishes! While I spoke,

The thought I called a flower, grew nettle-rough-The thoughts, called bees, stung me to

festering. "Oh, entertain" (cried Reason, as she

"Your best and gladdest thoughts

but long enough, And they will all prove sad enough to

sting."

AN APPREHENSION

If all the gentlest-hearted friends I know

Concentrated in one heart their gentleness.

That still grew gentler, till its pulse was less

For life than pity,—I should yet be

To bring my own heart nakedly below The palm of such a friend, that he should press

Motive, condition, means, appliances, My false ideal joy and fickle woe,

To the dear Christian church—that Out full to light and knowledge. I should fear

some rougher chime

In the free voice . . . O angels, let your flood

Of bitter scorn dash on me! Do ye hear

This everlasting face-to-face with

DISCONTENT

LIGHT human nature is too lightly tost And ruffled without cause,-complaining on—

Restless with rest—until, being overthrown.

It learneth to lie quiet. Let a frost Or a small wasp have crept to the innermost

Of our ripe peach, or let the wilful

Shine westward of our window,straight we run

A furlong's sigh, as if the world were

But what time through the heart and through the brain

God hath transfixed us,-we, so moved before.

Attain to a calm. Ay, shouldering weights of pain. We anchor in deep waters, safe from

shore; And hear, submissive, o'er the stormy

God's chartered judgments walk for evermore.

PATIENCE TAUGHT BY NATURE

O DREARY life! "we cry, "O dreary life!"

And still the generations of the birds Sing through our sighing, and the flocks and herds

Serenely live while we are keeping

With Heaven's true purpose in us, as a knife

Against which we may struggle. Ocean girds

Unslackened the dry land, savannah-swards

Unweary sweep, hills watch, unworn; and rife Meek leaves drop yearly from the for-

est-trees,

To show above, the unwasted stars that pass
In their old glory. O thou God of

old!
Grant me some smaller grace than

comes to these,—

But so much patience, as a blade of grass

Grows by contented through the heat and cold.

CHEERFULNESS TAUGHT BY REASON

I THINK we are too ready with complaint

In this fair world of God's. Had we no hope

Indeed beyond the zenith and the slope

Of you grey blank of sky, we might grow faint

To muse upon eternity's constraint Round our aspirant souls. But since the scope

Must widen early, is it well to droop, For a few days consumed in loss and taint?

O pusillanimous Heart, be comforted,—

And, like a cheerful traveller, take the road,

road, . Singing beside the hedge. What if

the bread

Be bitter in thine inn, and thou un-

To meet the flints?—At least it may be said,

"Because the way is short, I thank thee, God!"

EXAGGERATION

We overstate the ills of life, and take Imagination, given us to bring down The choirs of singing angels overshone

By God's clear glory,—down our earth to rake

The dismal snows instead,—flake following flake.

To cover all the corn. We walk upon
The shadow of hills across a level
thrown,

And pant like climbers. Near the alder brake

We sigh so loud, the nightingale within

Refuses to sing loud, as else she would.

O brothers! let us leave the shame and sin

Of taking vainly, in a plaintive mood, The holy name of Grief!—holy herein,

That, by the grief of One, came all our good.

ADEQUÁCY

Now, by the verdure on thy thousand hills,

Beloved England,—doth the earth appear

Perfect enough for men to overbear The will of God in, with rebellious wills!

We cannot say the morning-sun fulfils Ingloriously its course, nor that the clear

Strong stars, without significance, insphere

Our habitation. We, meantime, our ills

Heap up against this good, and lift a cry

Against this work-day world, this ill-

Against this work-day world, this illspread feast,

As if ourselves were better certainly Than what we come to. Maker and High Priest,

I ask Thee not my joys to multiply,— Only to make me worthier of the least.

TO GEORGE SAND

A DESIRE

Thou large-brained woman and largehearted man,

Self-called George Sand! whose soul, amid the lions

Of thy tumultuous senses, moans defiance,

And answers roar for roar, as spirits can!

I would some mild miraculous thunder ran

Above the applauded circus, in appliance

Of thine own nobler nature's strength and science,—

Drawing two pinions, white as wings of swan,

From thy strong shoulders, to amaze A strange, wild music to the prisoner's the place

woman's claim,

And man's, might'st join beside the angel's grace Of a pure genius sanctified from

blame.—

Till child and maiden pressed to thine Streams, forests, glades,—and many a embrace,

To kiss upon thy lips a stainless fame. Of sunlit hills, transfigured to Divine.

TO GEORGE SAND

A RECOGNITION

TRUE genius, but true woman! dost

Thy woman's nature with a manly scorn,

And break away the gauds and armlets worn

By weaker women in captivity? Ah, vain denial! that revolted cry Is sobbed in by a woman's voice for-

lorn !-Thy woman's hair, my sister, all un-

shorn, Floats back dishevelled strength in

agony, Disproving thy man's name! and

while before The world, thou burnest in a poetfire,

We see thy woman-heart beat evermore

Through the large flame. Beat purer, heart, and higher,

Till God unsex thee on the heavenly shore.

Where unincarnate spirits purely aspire.

THE PRISONER

I count the dismal time by months and years,

Since last I felt the green sward under

And the great breath of all things summer-mute

Met mine upon my lips. Now earth appears As strange to me as dreams of distant

spheres,

Or thoughts of Heaven we weep at. Nature's lute

Sounds on behind this door so closely shut,

ears

With holier light! That thou to Dilated by the distance, till the brain Grows dim with fancies which it feels too fine:

While ever, with a visionary pain,

Past the precluded senses, sweep and shine

golden train

INSUFFICIENCY

When I attain to utter forth in verse Some inward thought, my soul throbs audibly

Along my pulses, yearning to be free And something farther, fuller, higher, rehearse.

To the individual, true, and the universe.

In consummation of right harmony. But, like a wind-exposed, distorted

We are blown against for ever by the curse

Which breathes through nature. Oh, the world is weak-

The effluence of each is false to all; And what we best conceive, we fail to speak.

Wait, soul, until thine ashen garments

And then resume thy broken strains, and seek

Fit peroration, without let or thrall.

THE ROMAUNT OF THE PAGE

A KNIGHT of gallant deeds

And a young page at his side, From the holy war in Palestine Did slow and thoughtful ride,

As each were a palmer and told for beads

The dews of the eventide.

"O young page," said the knight, "A noble page art thou!

Thou fearest not to steep in blood The curls upon thy brow;

And once in the tent, and twice in the

Didst ward me a mortal blow."

TTT

"O brave knight," said the page,
"Or ere we hither came,
We talked in tent, we talked in field,
Of the bloody battle-game;
Buthere, below this greenwood bough,

I cannot speak the same.

IV

"Our troop is far behind,

The woodland calm is new; Our steeds, with slow grass-muffled hoofs.

Tread deep the shadows through; And in my mind, some blessing kind Is dropping with the dew.

v

"The woodland calm is pure—
I cannot choose but have
A thought, from these, o' the beechentrees

Which in our England wave; And of the little finches fine Which sang there while in Palestine The warrior-hilt we drave.

VI:

"Methinks, a moment gone,
I heard my mother pray!
I heard, sir knight, the prayer for me
Wherein she passed away;
And I know the Heavens are leaning
down

To hear what I shall say."

VII

The page spake calm and high,
As of no mean degree;
Perhaps he felt in nature's broad
Full heart, his own was free;
And the knight looked up to his
lifted eye,

Then answered smilingly:-

III

"Sir page, I pray your grace! Certes, I meant not so

To cross your pastoral mood, Sir page, With the crook of the battle-bow; But a knight may speak of a lady's face,

I ween, in any mood or place, If the grasses die or grow.

IX

"And this I meant to say,—
My lady's face shall shine,
As ladies' faces use, to greet
My page from Palestine:

Or, speak she fair or prank she gay, She is no lady of mine.

x

"And this I meant to fear,—
Her bower may suit thee ill!
For, sooth, in that same field and tent,
Thy talk was somewhat still;
And fitter thy hand for my knightly
spear,

Than thy tongue for my lady's will."

XI

Slowly and thankfully The young page bowed his head:
His large eye seemed to muse a smile,
Until he bished instead,

And no lady in her bower pardiè, Could blush more sudden red— "Sir knight,—thy lady's bower to me Is suited well," he said.

"Beati, beati, mortui!"

From the convent on the sea,— One mile off, or scarce as nigh, Swells the dirge as clear and high As if that, over brake and lea, Bodily the wind did carry The great altar of St. Mary, And the fifty tapers turning o'er it, And the Lady Abbess dead before it

And the chanting nuns whom yesterweek

Her voice did charge and bless—Chanting steady, chanting meek, Chanting with a solemn breath Because that they are thinking less Upon the Dead than upon death! "Beati, beati, mortui!" Now the vision in the sound

Wheeleth on the wind around— Now it sweepeth back, away— The uplands will not let it stay To dark the western sun. Mortui!—away at last,—

Or ere the page's blush is past! And the knight heard all, and the page heard none.

XIII

"A boon, thou noble knight,
If ever I served thee!
Though thou art a knight and I am a
page,
Now grant a boon to me—

And tell me sooth, if dark or bright,

If little loved or loved aright Be the face of thy ladye."

XIX

Gloomily looked the knight;—
"As a son thou hast served me:
And would to none I had granted

Except to only thee!

For haply then I should love aright, For then I should know if dark or bright

Were the face of my ladye.

XV

"Yet ill it suits my knightly tongue To grudge that granted boon! That heavy price from heart and life I paid in silence down: The hand that claimed it, cleared in

fine
My father's fame: I swear by mine,

That price was nobly won.

"Earl Walter was a brave old earl,—
He was my father's friend;
And while I rode the lists at Court,
And little guessed the end,
My noble father in his shroud,
Against a slanderer lying loud,
He rose up to defend.

XVII

"Oh, calm, below the marble grey My father's dust was strown! Oh, meek, above the marble grey His image prayed alone! The slanderer lied—the wretch was

brave,—

For, looking up the minster-nave, He saw my father's knightly glaive Was changed from steel to stone.

XVIII

"But Earl Walter's glaive was steel, With a brave old hand to wear it, And dashed the lie back in the mouth Which lied against the godly truth And against the knightly merit! The slanderer, 'neath the avenger's

The slanderer, 'neath the avenger heel,

Struck up the dagger in appeal From stealthy lie to brutal force— And out upon the traitor's corse Was yielded the true spirit.

XIX

"I would mine hand had fought that fight

And justified my father!

I would mine heart had caught that
wound

And slept beside him rather! I think it were a better thing Than murthered friend, and marriagering

Forced on my life together.

XX

"Wail shook Earl Walter's house— His true wife shed no tear— She lay upon her bed as mute As the earl did on his bier:

Till—'Ride, ride fast,' she said at last,
'And bring the avengèd's son
anear!

Ride fast—ride free, as a dart can flee,

For white of blee with waiting for me Is the corse in the next chambère.'

XXI

"I came—I knelt beside her bed— Her calm was worse than strife— 'My husband, for thy father dear, Gave freely when thou wert not here His own and eke my life.

A boon! Of that sweet child we make

An orphan for thy father's sake, Make thou, for ours, a wife.'

XXII

"I said, 'My steed neighs in the court,
My bark rocks on the brine,

And the warrior's vow I am under now

To free the pilgrim's shrine; But fetch the ring and fetch

But fetch the ring and fetch the priest

And call that daughter of thire

And call that daughter of thine, And rule she wide from my castle on Nyde

While I am in Palestine.'

XXII

"In the dark chambère, if the bride was fair,

Ye wis, I could not see, But the steed thrice neighed, and the priest fast prayed,

And wedded fast were we. Her mother smiled upon her bed As at its side we knelt to wed,

And the bride rose from her knee

And kissed the smile of her mother dead,

Or ever she kissed me.

VIX

"My page, my page, what grieves thee so,

That the tears run down thy face?"—

"Alas, alas! mine own sister
Was in thy lady's case!
But she laid down the silks she wore
And followed him she wed before,
Disguised as his true servitor,
To the very battle-place."

XXV

And wept the page, and laughed the knight,—

A careless laugh laughed he:
"Well done it were for thy sister,
But not for my ladye!

My love, so please you, shall requite No woman, whether dark or bright, Unwomaned if she be."

XXVI

The page stopped weeping and smiled cold—

"Your wisdom may declare
That womanhood is proved the best
By golden brooch and glossy vest
The mincing ladies wear;
Yet is it proved, and was of old,
Anear as well, I dare to hold,
By truth, or by despair."

XXVII

He smiled no more, he wept no more, But passionate he spake,—
"Oh, womanly she prayed in tent, When none beside did wake!
Oh, womanly she paled in fight, For one beloved's sake!—
And her little hand defiled with blood, Her tender tears of womanhood
Most woman-pure did make!"

XXVIII

"—Well done it were for thy sister,
Thou tellest well her tale!
But for my lady, she shall pray
I' the kirk of Nydesdale;
Not dread for me but love for me
Shall make my lady pale;
No casque shall hide her woman's
tear—

It shall have room to trickle clear Behind her woman's veil."

XXIX

"—But what if she mistook thy mind
And followed thee to strife,

Then kneeling, did entreat thy love, As Paynims ask for life?"

"—I would forgive, and evermore Would love her as my servitor,
But little as my wife.

XXX

"Look up—there is a small bright cloud

Alone amid the skies!

So high, so pure, and so apart,
A woman's honour lies."

The page looked up—the cloud was sheen—

A sadder cloud did rush, I ween, Betwixt it and his eyes:

XXXI

Then dimly dropped his eyes away From welkin unto hill—

Ha! who rides there?—the page is ware,

Though the cry at his heart is still!

And the page seeth all and the knight seeth none.

Though banner and spear do fleck the sun.

And the Saracens ride at will.

XXXII

He speaketh calm, he speaketh low,—

"Ride fast, my master, ride,
Or ere within the broadening aark
The narrow shadows hide!"

"Yea, fast, my [page, I will do so,
And keep thou at my side."

XXXIII

"Now nay, now nay, ride on thy way.
Thy faithful page precede!
For I must loose on saddle-bow
My battle-casque that galls, I trow.
The shoulder of my steed;
And I must pray, as I did yow,

XXXIV

For one in bitter need.

"Ere night I shall be near to thee,— Now ride, my master, ride! Ere night, as parted spirits cleave To mortals too beloved to leave, I shall be at thy side." The knight smiled free at the fantasy,

And adown the dell did ride.

vvvv

Had the knight looked up to the page's face,

No smile the word had won:
Had the knight looked up to the
page's face,

I ween he had never gone:

Had the knight looked back to the page's geste,

I ween he had turned anon: For dread was the woe in the face so

young,

And wild was the silent geste that

flung
Casque, sword to earth—as the boy

down-sprung,

And stood—alone, alone.

XXXVI

He clenched his hands as if to hold His soul's great agony—

'Have I renounced my womanhood,
For wifehood unto thee,
And is this the last, last look of thine

And is this the last, last look of thine That ever I shall see?

XXXVII

"Yet God thee save, and mayst thou have

A lady to thy mind,

More woman-proud and half as true As one thou leav'st behind! And God me take with Him to dwell— For Him I cannot love too well, As I have loved my kind."

XXXVIII

SHE looketh up in earth's despair, The hopeful Heavens to seek: That little cloud still floateth there, Whereof her Loved did speak. How bright the little cloud appears! Her eyelids fall upon the tears, And the tears down either cheek.

XXXXX

The tramp of hoof, the flash of steel— The Paynims round her coming! The sound and sight have made her calm,—

False page, but truthful woman! She stands amid them all unmoved: A heart once broken by the loved Is strong to meet the foeman.

XL

"Ho, Christian page! art keeping sheep, From pouring wine-cups resting?"—

B.P.

"I keep my master's noble name, For warring, not for feasting; And if that here Sir Hubert were, My master brave, my master dear, Ye would not stay to question."

XLI

"Where is thy master, scornful page, That we may slay or bind him?"—
"Now search the lea and search the
wood

And see if ye can find him! Nathless, as hath been often tried. Your Paynim heroes faster ride Before him than behind him."

TLIX

"Give smoother answers, lying page, Or perish in the lying."—

"I trow that if the warrior brand Beside my foot, were in my hand, "Twere better at replying."

They cursed her deep, they smote her low,

They cleft her golden ringlets through;
The Loving is the Dying.

XLIII

She felt the scimitar gleam down,
And met it from beneath,
With smile more bright in victory
Than any sword from sheath,—
Which flashed across her lip serene,
Most like the spirit-light between
The darks of life and death.

XLIV

"Ingemisco, ingemisco!"
From the convent on the sea,
Now it sweepeth solemnly!
As over wood and over lea
Bodily the wind did carry
The great altar of St. Mary,
And the fifty tapers paling o'er it,
And the Lady Abbess stark before
it

And the weary nuns, with hearts that faintly

Beat along their voices saintly— "Ingemisco, ingemisco!"

Dirge for abbess laid in shroud,
Sweepeth o'er the shroudless Dead,
Page or lady, as we said,
With the dews upon her head,
All as sad if not as loud.

"Ingemisco, ingemisco!"
Is ever a lament begun

By any mourner under sun, Which, ere it endeth, suits but one?

THE LAY OF THE BROWN ROSARY

FIRST PART

"ONORA, Onora!"-her mother is calling.

She sits at the lattice and hears the dew falling

Drop after drop from the sycamores laden

With dew as with blossom, and calls home the maiden.

"Night cometh, Onora!"

She looks down the garden-walk caverned with trees.

To the limes at the end where the green arbour is-

"Some sweet thought or other may keep where it found her.

While forgot or unseen in the dreamlight around her, Night cometh, Onora!"

She looks up the forest whose alleys shoot on

Like the mute minster-aisles, when the anthem is done.

And the choristers sitting with faces aslant

Feel the silence to consecrate more than the chant-"Onora, Onora!"

And forward she looketh across the brown heath-

"Onora, art coming?"-What is it she seeth?

Nought, nought, but the grey border-

stone that is wist

" My daughter!"-Then over

the mist-

The casement she leaneth, and as she doth so.

She is 'ware of her little son playing below:

down his head

blushed scarlet-red,-

" At the tryst with her lover."

But his mother was wroth. In a sternness quoth she.

" As thou play'st at the ball, art thou playing with me?

When we know that her lover to battle is gone. And the saints know above that she

loveth but one

And will ne'er wed another?"

Then the boy wept aloud. 'Twas a fair sight yet sad,

To see the tears run down the sweet blooms he had: ^

He stamped with his foot, said—"The saints know I lied

Because truth that is wicked is fittest to hide!

Must I utter it, mother?"

In his vehement childhood he hurried within.

And knelt at her feet as in prayer against sin;

But a child at a prayer never sobbeth as he-

"Oh! she sits with the nun of the brown rosary,

At nights in the ruin!

"The old convent ruin the ivy rots off, Where the owl hoots by day, and the toad is sun-proof;

Where no singing-birds build, and the trees gaunt and grey

As in stormy sea-coasts appear blasted one way-But is this the wind's doing?

" A nun in the east wall was buried

alive. Who mocked at the priest when he

called her to shrive.-And shrieked such a curse as the stone

took her breath. To dilate and assume a wild shape in The old abbess fell backward and

swooned unto death With an 'Ave' half-spoken.

"I tried once to pass it, myself and my hound,

Till, as fearing the lash, down he shivered to ground.

"Now where is Onora?"—He hung A brave hound, my mother! a brave hound, ye wot!

And spake not, then answering And the wolf thought the same with his fangs at her throat

In the pass of the Brocken.

"At dawn and at eve, mother, who "Since thou shrivest my brother, fair sitteth there,

With the brown rosary never use 1 for a praver?

there to see,

What an ugly great hole in that east. That my lover rides on-will be here wall must be

At dawn and at even!

"Who meet there, my mother, at Her mother sate silent—too tender, I dawn and at even?

Who meet by that wall, never looking to heaven?

O sweetest my sister, what doeth with But the boy started up pale with The ghost of a nun with a brown

rosary And a face turned from heaven?

"St. Agnes o'erwatcheth my dreams,

and erewhile I have felt through mine eyelids the

warmth of her smile-But last night, as a sadness like pity Did they ever look so since he bade

came o'er her. She whispered—'Say two prayers at Oh, love in the waking, sweet brother, dawn for Onora!

The Tempted is sinning."

Onora, Onora! they heard her not Half-ashamed and half-softened the coming-

through the gloaming!

But her mother looked up, and she She bowed down to kiss him-Dear stood on the floor

came there before. And a smile just beginning.

It touches her lips—but it dares not arise

To the height of the mystical sphere of A bed-Onora sleeping. Angels, but her eyes:

And the large musing eyes, neither joyous nor sorry,

Sing on like the angels in separate glory,

Between clouds of amber.

For the hair droops in clouds ambercoloured, till stirred Into gold by the gesture that comes

with a word. While—O soft!—her speaking is so interwound

Of the dim and the sweet, 'tis a twilight of sound

And floats through the chamber.

mother," said she,

'I count on thy priesthood for marrying of me.

Stoop low, mother, low! If we went And I know by the hills that the battle is done-

with the sun,

'Neath the eyes that behold thee."

wis,

Of the smile her dead father smiled dying to kiss;

tears passion wrought,-

"O wicked fair sister, the hills utter nought!

If he cometh, who told thee?"

"I know by the hills," she resumed calm and clear,

" By the beauty upon them, that HE is anear.

me adieu?

is true

As St. Agnes in sleeping."

boy did not speak,

Not a step on the grass, not a voice And the blush met the lashes which fell on his cheek:

saints, did he see Fair and still as the moonlight that Or feel on her bosom the BROWN

ROSARY That he shrank away weeping?

SECOND PART

not near.

First Angel. Must we stand so far, and she So very fair? Second Angel.

As bodies be. First Angel.

And she so mild? Second Angel.

As spirits when They meeken, not to God but men. First Angel.

And she so young,—that I who bring Good dreams for saintly children, might

Mistake that small soft face tonight,

And fetch her such a blessed thing That at her waking she would weep For childhood lost anew in sleep. How hath she sinned?

Second Angel.

In bartering love-God's love—for man's:

First Angel.

We may reprove The world for this! not only her. Let me approach, to breathe away This dust o' the heart with holy

Second Angel.

pray.

First Angel.

Did none pray for her? Second Angel.

Ay, a child,—

Who never, praying, wept before: While, in a mother undefiled Prayer goeth on in sleep, as true And pauseless as the pulses do. First Angel.

Then I approach Second Angel.

It is not WILLED.

First Angel.

One word: Is she redeemed? Second Angel.

No more!

THE PLACE IS FILLED.

[Angels vanish.

Evil Spirit in a Nun's garb by the bed.

Forbear that dream-forbear that dream! too near to Heaven it leaned.

Onora in sleep.

Nay, leave me this-but only this! 'tis but a dream, sweet fiend! Evil Spirit.

It is a thought. Onora in sleep.

A sleeping thought-most innocent of good-

It doth the Devil no harm, sweet fiend! it cannot, if it would.

I say in it no holy hymn, I do no holy work,

chimeth from the kirk.

Evil Spirit.

Forbear that dream-forbear that dream!

Onora in sleep.

Nay, let me dream at least. That far-off bell, it may be took for viol at a feast.

I only walk among the fields, beneath the autumn sun,

With my dead father, hand in hand, as I have often done.

Evil Spirit.

Forbear that dream—forbear that dream!

Onora in sleep.

Nay, sweet fiend, let me go-Stand off! She sleeps, and did not I never more can walk with him, oh. never more but so.

For they have tied my father's feet beneath the kirkyard stone,-

Oh, deep and straight, oh, very straight! they move at nights alone:

And then he calleth through my dreams, he calleth tenderly,

"Come forth, my daughter, my beloved, and walk the fields with me!

Evil Spirit.

Forbear that dream, or else disprove its pureness by a sign.

Onora in sleep.

Speak on, thou shalt be satisfied! my word shall answer thine. I hear a bird which used to sing when

I a child was praying,

I see the poppies in the corn I used to sport away in.—

What shall I do—tread down the dew, and pull the blossoms blowing?

Or clap my wicked hands to fright the finches from the rowan?

Evil Spirit. Thou shalt do something harder still. Stand up where thou dost stand.

Among the fields of Dreamland with thy father hand in hand,

And clear and slow, repeat the vowdeclare its cause and kind.

Which, not to break in sleep or wake, thou bearest on thy mind. Onora in sleep.

I scarcely hear the Sabbath-bell that I bear a vow of wicked kind, a vow for mournful cause:

I vowed it deep, I vowed it strongthe spirits laughed applause: The spirits trailed along the pines low laughter like a breeze,

While, high atween their swinging tops, the stars appeared to freeze.

Evil Spirit.

More calm and free,—speak out to me, why such a vow was made. Onora in sleep.

Because that God decreed my death and I shrank back afraid.

Have patience, O dead father mine! I did not fear to die;—

I wish I were a young dead child, and had thy company!

I wish I lay beside thy feet, a buried three-year child,

And wearing only a kiss of thine upon my lips that smiled!

The linden-tree that covers thee might so have shadowed twain— For death itself I did not fear—'tis

love that makes the pain. Love feareth death. I was no child

—I was betrothed that day; I wore a troth-kiss on my lips I could not give away.

How could I bear to lie content and still beneath a stone,

And feel mine own betrothed go by—alas! no more mine own,— Go leading by, in wedding pomp, some lovely lady brave,

With cheeks that blushed as red as rose, while mine were white in grave?

How could I bear to sit in Heaven, on e'er so high a throne,

And hear him say to her-to her ! that else he loveth none? Though e'er so high I sate above,

though e'er so low he spake, As clear as thunder I would hear the

new oath he might take-That hers, forsooth, are heavenly I vowed upon thy rosary brown, this eyes—ah me! while very dim

Some heavenly eyes (indeed of Heaven!) would darken down to him.

Eur Spirit.

Who told thee thou wert called to death?

Onora in sleep.

I sate all night beside thee—

The grey owl on the ruined wall shut both his eyes to hide thee,

And ever he flapped his heavy wing all brokenly and weak,

And the long grass waved against the sky, around his gasping beak.

I sate beside thee all the night, while the moonlight lay forlorn,

Strewn round us like a dead world's shroud, in ghastly fragments

And through the night, and through the hush, and over the flapping wing,

We heard beside the Heavenly Gate the angels murmuring :---

We heard them say,)" Put day to day, and count the days to seven,

And God will draw Onora up the golden stairs of Heaven:

And yet the Evil ones have leave that purpose to defer,

For if she has no need of HIM, He has no need of her."-Evil Spirit.

Speak out to me-speak bold and free. Onora in sleep.

And then I heard thee say,— "I count upon my rosary brown the hours thou hast to stay!

Yet God permits us Evil ones to put by that decree,

Since if thou hast no need of Him, He has no need of thee-

And if thou wilt forego the sight of angels, verily

Thy true love gazing on thy face, shall guess what angels be-

Nor bride shall pass, save thee " . . . Alas!-my father's hand's acold-

The meadows seem—

Evil Spirit.

Forbear the dream, or let the vow be told! Onora in sleep.

string of antique beads,

By charnel lichens overgrown, and dank among the weeds—

This rosary brown, which is thine own, -lost soul of buried nun,

Who, lost by vow, wouldst render now all souls alike undone,-

I vowed upon thy resary brown,and, till such yow should break, A pledge always of living days, 'twas hung around my neck-

I vowed to thee on rosary (Dead father, look not so!),

I would not thank God in my weal, nor seek God in my woe.

Evil Spirit.

And canst thou prove . . ? Onora in sleep.

> O love-my love! I felt him near again!

I saw his steed on mountain-head, I heard it on the plain!

Was this no weal for me to feel?—is greater weal than this?

Yet when he came, I wept his nameand the angels heard but his. Evil Spirit.

Well done, well done! Onora in sleep.

Ay me! the sun . . . the dreamlight gins to pine,—

Ay me! how dread can look the Dead !—Aroint thee, father mine!

She starteth from slumber, she sitteth upright,

And her breath comes in sobs while she stares through the night, There is nought. The great willow,

her lattice before, Large-drawn in the moon, lieth calm

on the floor; But her hands tremble fast as their pulses and free

From the death-clasp, close overthe BROWN ROSARY.

THIRD PART

'Tis a morn for a bridal; the merry bride-b 'll

Rings clear through the greenwood Out spake the bride's mother—"The that skirts the chapelle;

And the priest at the altar awaiteth the bride.

And the sacristans slyly are jesting

At the work shall be doing.

While down through the wood rides that fair company,

The youths with the courtship, the maids with the glee,—

Till the chapel-cross opens to sight, and at once

All the maids sigh demurely and think for the nonce

"And so endeth a wooing!"

And the bride and the bridegroom are leading the way,

With his hand on her rein, and a word yet to say:

Her dropt eyelids suggest the soft answers beneath,-

And the little quick smiles come and go with her breath, When she sigheth or speaketh.

And the tender bride-mother breaks off unaware

From an "Ave," to think that her daughter is fair,—

Till in nearing the chapel and glancing before

She seeth her little son stand at the door,---Is it play that he seeketh?

Is it play? when his eyes wander innocent-wild,

And sublimed with a sadness unfitting a child! He trembles not, weeps not-the

passion is done, And calmly he kneels in their midst, with the sun

On his head like a glory.

"O fair-featured maids, ye are many!" he cried,-

"But, in fairness and vileness, who matcheth the bride?

O brave-hearted youths, ye are many! but whom, For the courage and woe, can ve

match with the groom, As ye see them before ye?"

vileness is thine, If thou shame thine own sister, a

bride at the shrine!"

Out spake the bride's lover-" The vileness be mine,

If he shame mine own wife at the hearth or the shrine. And the charge be unproved.

"Bring the charge, prove the charge, brother! speak it aloud-

Let thy father and hers, hear it deep in his shroud!"

_"O father, thou seest—for dead eves can see-

How she wears on her bosom a brown In wrath, the bride's lover,—"The lie rosary,

O my father belovêd!"

Then out laughed the bridegroom, and out laughed withal

Both maidens and youths, by the old chapel-wall-

" So she weareth no love-gift, kind brother," quoth he,

"She may wear, an she listeth, a brown rosary,

Like a pure-hearted lady."

Then swept through the chapel the long bridal train:

Though he spake to the bride she replied not again:

On, as one in a dream, pale and stately she went

Where the altar-lights burn o'er the great sacrament,

Faint with daylight, but steady.

But her brother had passed in between them and her.

And calmly knelt down on the highaltar stair-

Of an infantine aspect so stern to the

That the priest could not smile on the child's eyes of blue, As he would for another.

He knelt like a child marble-sculptured and white

That seems kneeling to pray on the tomb of a knight,

With a look taken up to each iris of

From the greatness and death where he kneeleth, but none From the face of a mother.

"In your chapel, O priest, ye have wedded and shriven

Fair wives for the hearth, and fair sinners for Heaven!

But this fairest my sister, ye think now to wed,

Bid her kneel where she standeth, and shrive her instead-

O shrive her and wed not!"

In tears, the bride's mother,—" Sir priest, unto thee

Would he lie, as he lied to this fair company!"

shall be clear!

Speak it out, boy! the saints in their niches shall hear-

Be the charge proved or said

Then serene in his childhood he lifted his face.

And his voice sounded holy and fit for the place-

"Look down from your niches, ye still saints, and see

How she wears on her bosom a brown rosary!

Is it used for the praying?"

The youths looked aside-to laugh there was a sin-

And the maidens' lips trembled from smiles shut within:

Quoth the priest, "Thou art wild, pretty boy! Blessed she Who prefers at her bridal a brown

rosary

To a worldly arraying!"

The bridegroom spake low and led onward the bride.

And before the high altar they stood side by side:

The rite-book is opened, the rite is begun,

They have knelt down together to rise up as one-

Who laughed by the altar?

The maidens looked forward, the youths looked around,—

The bridegroom's eye flashed from his prayer at the sound;

And each saw the bride, as if no bride she were. Gazing cold at the priest without

gesture of prayer, As he read from the psalter.

The priest never knew that she did

so, but still He felt a power on him too strong for his will.

And whenever the Great Name was there to be read,

His voice sank to silence—THAT could not be said.

Or the air could not hold it.

sinned, I wot "-

cheeks at the thought;

They dropped fast on the book; but he read on the same,—

And aye was the silence where should be the NAME. -

As the choristers told it.

The rite-book is closed, and the rite being done

They who knelt down together, arise up as one:

Fair riseth the bride-Oh, a fair Wild she sprang to her feet,-"I bride is she,-

But, for all (think the maidens) that The brown rosary,

No saint at her praying!

What aileth the bridegroom? glares blank and wide-

Then suddenly turning, he kisseth the Where it fell mute as snow, and a

His lip stung her with cold: she Crept up, like a chill, up the aisles glanced upwardly mute:

"Mine own wife," he said, and fell As the fiends tried to mock at the stark at her foot

In the word he was saying.

They have lifted him up,-but his head sinks away,

And his face showeth bleak in the sunshine and grey.

Leave him now where he lieth-for oh, never more Will he kneel at an altar or stand on a

floor!

Let his bride gaze upon him!

Long and still was her gaze, while Of the steadfast skies above, the they chafed him there,

And breathed in the mouth whose last life had kissed her.

But when they stood up—only they ! with a start

The shriek from her soul struck her pale lips apart-

She has lived, and foregone him!

And low on his body she droppeth adown-

"Didst call me thine own wife. beloved—thine own?

Then take thine own with thee! thy coldness is warm

To the world's cold without thee ! Come, keep me from harm In a calm of thy teaching!"

"I have sinned," quoth he, "I have | She looked in his face earnest long, as in sooth

And the tears ran adown his old | There were hope of an answer, - and then kissed his mouth,

> And with head on his bosom, wept, wept bitterly,—

> "Now, O God, take pity—take pity on me!-

God, hear my beseeching!"

She was 'ware of a shadow that crossed where she lay;

She was 'ware of a presence that withered the day-

surrender to thee

broken vow's pledge,—the accursed rosary,-I am ready for dying!"

He She dashed it in scorn to the marblepaved ground,

weird music-sound

long and dim,-

choristers' hymn, And mounted at the trying.

FOURTH PART

Onora looketh listlessly adown the garden walk:

"I am weary, O my mother, of thy tender talk!

I am weary of the trees a-waving to and fro-

running brooks below ;--

All things are the same but I,—only I am dreary,

And, mother, of my dreariness behold me very weary.

" Mother, brother, pull the flowers I planted in the spring

And smiled to think I should smile more upon their gathering.

The bees will find out other flowersoh, pull them, dearest mine,

And carry them and carry me before St. Agnes' shrine."

-Whereat they pulled the summer flowers she planted in the spring. And her and them all mournfully to

Agnes' shrine did bring.

She looked up to the pictured saint and gently shook her head-

"The picture is too calm for metoo calm for me," she said: "The little flowers we brought with

us, before it we may lay, For those are used to look at Heaven.

-but I must turn away,-

Because no sinner under sun can dare or bear to gaze

On God's or angel's holiness, except in Jesu's face."

She spoke with passion after pause-And were it wisely done.

If we who cannot gaze above, should walk the earth alone?

If we whose virtue is so weak, should have a will so strong,

And stand blind on the rocks, to choose the right path from the wrong?

To choose perhaps a love-lit hearth, instead of love and Heaven,-

A single rose, for a rose-tree, which beareth seven times seven?

A rose that droppeth from the hand. that fadeth in the breast,-

Until, in grieving for the worst, we learn what is the best!"

Then breaking into tears,—" Dear God," she cried, "and must we

All blissful things depart from us, or ere we go to THEE?

We cannot guess Thee in the wood, or hear Thee in the wind?

Our cedars must fall round us, ere we see the light behind? Ay sooth, we feel too strong in weal

to need Thee on that road. But woe being come, the soul is

dumb that crieth not on 'God.'"

Her mother could not speak for tears: she ever musèd thus-

"The bees will find out other flowers,but what is left for us ?"

But her young brother stayed his sobs and knelt beside her knee -" Thou sweetest sister in the world,

hast never a word for me?" She passed her hand across his face, she pressed it on his cheek,

So tenderly, so tenderly—she needed not to speak.

The wreath which lay on shrine that day, at vespers bloomed no more-

The woman fair who placed it there, had died an hour before.

Both perished mute, for lack of root, earth's nourishment to reach ;-O reader, breathe (the ballad saith)

some sweetness out of each !

THE MOURNING MOTHER

(OF THE DEAD BLIND)

Dost thou weep, mourning mother, For thy blind boy in grave? That no more with each other.

Sweet counsel ye can have ?-That he, left dark by nature, Can never more be led

By thee, maternal creature. Along smooth paths instead? That thou canst no more show him

The sunshine, by the heat: The river's silver flowing,

By murmurs at his feet? The foliage, by its coolness: The roses, by their smell: And all creation's fulness.

By Love's invisible? Weepest thou to behold not His meek blind eyes again,-

Closed doorways which were folded, And prayed against in vain— And under which, sate smiling

The child-mouth evermore. As one who watcheth, wiling The time by, at a door?

And weepest thou to feel not His clinging hand on thine— Which now, at dream-time, will not

Its cold touch disentwine? And weepest thou still ofter, Oh, never more to mark

His low soft words, made softer By speaking in the dark? Weep on, thou mourning mother!

But since to him when living. Thou wert both sun and moon. Look o'er his grave, surviving, From a high sphere alone! Sustain that exaltation— Expand that tender light.

And hold in mother-passion, Thy Blessed, in thy sight. See how he went out straightway From the dark world he knew.-No twilight in the gateway To mediate 'twixt the two .-Into the sudden glory. Out of the dark he trod, Departing from before thee At once to light and GoD!— For the first face, beholding The Christ's in its divine.-For the first place, the golden And tideless hyaline; With trees, at lasting summer, That rock to songful sound, While angels, the new-comer, Wrap a still smile around. Oh, in the blessed psalm now, His happy voice he tries,-Spreading a thicker palm-bough, Than others, o'er his eyes,-Yet still, in all the singing, Thinks haply of thy song Which, in his life's first springing, Sang to him all night long, And wishes it beside him. With kissing lips that cool And soft did overglide him,-To make the sweetness full. Look up. O mourning mother; Thy blind boy walks in light! Ye wait for one another, Before God's infinite! But thou art now the darkest, Thou mother left below-Thou, the soul blind,—thou markest. Content that it be so :-Until ve two give meeting Where Heaven's pearl-gate is. And he shall lead thy feet in, As once thou leddest his!

Wait on, thou mourning mother. A VALEDICTION

God be with thee, my beloved.—God be with thee! Else alone thou goest forth, Thy face unto the north,-Moor and pleasance, all around thee and beneath thee, Looking equal in one snow; While I who try to reach thee, Vainly follow, vainly follow. With the farewell and the hollo. And cannot reach thee so: Alas! I can but teach thee! be with thee!

God be with thee, my beloved, -God Can I teach thee, my beloved,—can I teach thee? If I said. "Go left or right." The counsel would be light,-The wisdom, poor of all that could enrich thee. My right would show like left ; My raising would depress thee,-My choice of light would blind Of way, would leave behind thee ---Of end, would leave bereft. Alas! I can but bless thee! May God teach thee, my beloved,may God teach thee! Can I bless thee, my beloved, -can I bless thee? What blessing word can I. From mine own tears, keep dry? What flowers grow in my field wherewith to dress thee? My good reverts to ill: calmnesses would move Mvthee .-Mv softnesses would prick My bindings up would break thee.— My crownings, curse and kill. Alas! I can but love thee!

May God bless thee, my beloved, may God bless thee! Can I love thee, my beloved,—can I

love thee?

And is this like love, to stand With no help in my hand, When strong as death I fain would watch above thee? My love-kiss can deny

No tear that falls beneath it: Mine oath of love can swear thee From no ill that comes near thee .-

And thou diest while I breathe it, And I—I can but die! May God love thee, my beloved,may God love thee!

LADY GERALDINE'S COURTSHIP

A ROMANCE OF THE AGE

A poet writes to his friend. Place—A room in Wycombe Hall. Time—Late in the evening.

DEAR my friend and fellow-student, I would lean my spirit o'er you! Down the purple of this chamber, tears should scarcely run at will. I am humbled who was humble! Friend,—I bow my head before you! You should lead me to my peasants,—but their faces are too still.

There's a lady—an earl's daughter; she is proud and she is noble, And she treads the crimson carpet, and she breathes the perfumed air, And a kingly blood sends glances up her princely eye to trouble, And the shadow of a monarch's crown is softened in her hair.

She has halls among the woodlands, and has castles by the breakers, She has farms and she has manors, she can threaten and command, And the palpitating engines snort in steam across her acres, As they mark upon the blasted heaven the measure of the land.

There are none of England's daughters who can show a prouder presence; Upon princely suitors praying, she has looked in her disdain: She was sprung of English nobles, I was born of English peasants; What was I that I should love her—save for competence to pain?

I was only a poor poet, made for singing at her casement, As the finches or the thrushes, while she thought of other things. Oh, she walked so high above me, she appeared to my abasement, In her lovely silken murmur, like an angel clad in wings!

Many vassals bow before her as her carriage sweeps their doorways; She has blest their little children,—as a priest or queen were she! Far too tender, or too cruel far, her smile upon the poor was, For I thought it was the same smile which she used to smile on me.

She has voters in the Commons, she has lovers in the palace—And of all the fair court-ladies, few have jewels half as fine: Oft the prince has named her beauty 'twixt the red wine and the chalice: Oh, and what was I to love her? my beloved, my Geraldine!

Yet I could not choose but love her—I was born to poet-uses— To love all things set above me, all of good and all of fair. Nymphs of mountain, not of valley, we are wont to call the Muses—And in nympholeptic climbing, poets pass from mount to star.

And because I was a poet, and because the public praised me, With their critical deduction for the modern writer's fault, I could sit at rich men's tables,—though the courtesies that raised me, Still suggested clear between us the pale spectrum of the salt.

And they praised me in her presence;—" Will your book appear this summer?"

Then returning to each other—"Yes, our plans are for the moors;"
Then with whisper dropped behind me—"There he is! the latest comer!
Oh, she only likes his verses! what is over, she endures.

"Quite low-born! self-educated! somewhat gifted though by nature,—
And we make a point of asking him,—of being very kind:
You may speak, he does not hear you; and besides, he writes no satire,—
All these serpents kept by charmers, leave the natural sting behind."

I grew scornfuller, grew colder, as I stood up there among them, Till as frost intense will burn you, the cold scorning scorched my brow, When a sudden silver speaking, gravely cadenced, overrung them, And a sudden silken stirring touched my inner nature through.

I looked upward and beheld her! With a calm and regnant spirit, Slowly round she swept her eyelids, and said clear before them all—"Have you such superfluous honour, sir, that, able to confer it You will come down, Mr. Bertram, as my guest to Wycombe Hall?"

Here she paused,—she had been paler at the first word of her speaking, But because a silence followed it, blushed somewhat, as for shame; Then, as scorning her own feeling, resumed calmly—"I am seeking More distinction than these gentlemen think worthy of my claim.

"Ne'ertheless, you see, I seek it—not because I am a woman,"—
(Here her smile sprang like a fountain, and, so, overflowed her mouth)
"But because my woods in Sussex have some purple shades at gloaming,
Which are worthy of a king in state, or poet in his youth.

"I invite you, Mr. Bertram, to no scene for worldly speeches—Sir, I scarce should dare—but only where God asked the thrushes first—And if you will sing beside them, in the covert of my beeches, I will thank you for the woodlands, . . . for the human world, at worst."

Then, she smiled around right childly, then, she gazed around right queenly, And I bowed—I could not answer! Alternated light and gloom—While as one who quells the lions, with a steady eye serenely, She, with level fronting eyelids, passed on stately from the room.

Oh, the blessed woods of Sussex, I can hear them still around me, With their leafy tide of greenery still rippling up the wind! Oh, the cursed woods of Sussex! where the hunter's arrow found me, When a fair face and a tender voice had made me mad and blind!

In that ancient hall of Wycombe, thronged the numerous guests invited, And the lovely London ladies trod the floors with gliding feet, And their voices low with fashion, not with feeling, softly freighted All the air about the windows, with elastic laughters sweet.

For at eve, the open windows flung their light out on the terrace, Which the floating orbs of curtains did with gradual shadow sweep, While the swans upon the river, fed at morning by the heiress, Trembled downward through their snowy wings at music in their sleep.

And there evermore was music, both of instrument and singing, Till the finches of the shrubberies grew restless in the dark; But the cedars stood up motionless, each in a moonlight ringing, And the deer, half in the glimmer, strewed the hollows of the park.

And though sometimes she would bind me with her silver-corded speeches To commix my words and laughter with the converse and the jest, Oft I sate apart, and gazing on the river through the beeches, Heard, as pure the swans swam down it, her pure voice o'erfloat the rest.

In the morning, horn of huntsman, hoof of steed, and laugh of rider, Spread out cheery from the court-yard till we lost them in the hills, While herself and other ladies, and her suitors left beside her, Went a wandering up the gardens through the laurels and abeles.

Thus, her foot upon the new-mown grass—bareheaded—with the flowing Of the virginal white vesture gathered closely to her throat,

With the golden ringlets in her neck just quickened by her going, And appearing to breathe sun for air and doubting if to float,—

With a branch of dewy maple, which her right hand held above her, And which trembled a green shadow in betwixt her and the skies,—As she turned her face in going, thus, she drew me on to love her, And to worship the divineness of the smile hid in her eyes.

For her eyes alone smile constantly: her lips have serious sweetness, And her front is calm—the dimple rarely ripples on her cheek; But her deep blue eyes smile constantly, as if they in discreetness Kept the secret of a happy dream she does not care to speak.

Thus she drew me the first morning, out across into the garden, And I walked among her noble friends and could not keep behind; Spake she unto all and unto me—"Behold, I am the warden Of the song-birds in these lindens, which are cages to their mind.

"But within this swarded circle into which the lime-walk brings us, Whence the beeches, rounded greenly, stand away in reverent fear, I will let no music enter, saving what the fountain sings us Which the lilies round the basin may seem pure enough to hear.

"The live air that waves the lilies waves the slender jet of water Like a holy thought sent feebly up from soul of fasting saint! Whereby lies a marble Silence, sleeping! (Lough the sculptor wrought her) So asleep, she is forgetting to say 'Hush!'—a fancy quaint.

"Mark how heavy white her eyelids! not a dream between them lingers: And the left hand's index droppeth from the lips upon the cheek! And the right hand,—with the symbol rose held slack within the fingers,—Has fallen backward in the basin—yet this Silence will not speak!

"That the essential meaning growing may exceed the special symbol, Is the thought as I conceive it: it applies more high and low,—Our true noblemen will often through right nobleness grow humble, And assert an inward honour by denying outward show."

"Nay, your Silence," said I, "truly, holds her symbol rose but slackly, Yet she holds it—or would scarcely be a Silence to our ken! And your nobles wear their ermine on the outside, or walk blackly In the presence of the social law as most ignoble men.

"Let the poets dream such dreaming! Madam, in these British islands, 'Tis the substance that wanes ever, 'tis the symbol that exceeds: Soon we shall have nought but symbol! and, for statues like this Silence, Shall accept the rose's image—in another case, the weed's."

"Not so quickly!" she retorted,—"I confess, where'er you go you Find for things, names—shows for actions, and pure gold for honour clear; But when all is run to symbol in the Social, I will throw you The world's book which now reads drily, and sit down with Silence here."

Half in playfulness she spoke, I thought, and half in indignation; Friends who listened, laughed her words off, while her lovers deemed her fair: A fair woman flushed with feeling, in her noble-lighted station Near the statue's white reposing—and both bathed in sunny air!—

With the trees round not so distant but you heard their vernal murmur And beheld in light and shadow the leaves in and outward move; And the little fountain leaping toward the sun-heart to be warmer, Then recoiling in a tremble from the too much light above—

'Tis a picture for remembrance! and thus, morning after morning,
Did I follow as she drew me by the spirit to her feet—
Why her greyhound followed also! dogs—we both were dogs for scorning—
To be sent back when she pleased it and her path lay through the wheat.

And thus, morning after morning, spite of vows and spite of sorrow, Did I follow at her drawing, while the week-days passed along, Just to feed the swans this noontide, or to see the fawns to-morrow, Or to teach the hill-side echo some sweet Tuscan in a song.

Av. for sometimes on the hill-side, while we sate down in the gowans, With the forest green behind us, and its shadow cast before, And the river running under, and across it from the rowans A brown partridge whirring near us till we felt the air it bore,—

There, obedient to her praying, did I read aloud the poems Made by Tuscan flutes, or instruments more various of our own; Read the pastoral parts of Spenser—or the subtle interflowings Found in Petrarch's sonnets—here's the book—the leaf is folded down!—

Or at times a modern volume,—Wordsworth's solemn-thoughted idyl, Howitt's ballad-verse, or Tennyson's enchanted reverie,—
Or from Browning some "Pomegranate," which, if cut deep down the middle, Shows a heart within blood-tinctured, of a veined humanity!—

Or at times I read there, hoarsely, some new poem of my making—Poets ever fail in reading their own verses to their worth,—For the echo in you breaks upon the words which you are speaking, And the chariot-wheels jar in the gate through which you drive them forth.

After, when we were grown tired of books, the silence round us flinging A slow arm of sweet compression, felt with beatings at the breast,—She would break out, on a sudden, in a gush of woodland singing, Like a child's emotion in a god—a naiad tired of rest.

Oh, to see or hear her singing! scarce I know which is divinest—
For her looks sing too—she modulates her gestures on the tune;
And her mouth stirs with the song, like song; and when the notes are finest,
'Tis the eyes that shoot out vocal light and seem to swell them on.

Then we talked—oh, how we talked! her voice, so cadenced in the talking, Made another singing—of the soul! a music without bars—While the leafy sounds of woodlands, humming round where we were walking, Brought interposition worthy-sweet,—as skies about the stars.

And she spake such good thoughts natural, as if she always thought them—She had sympathies so rapid, open, free as bird on branch,
Just as ready to fly east as west, whichever way besought them
In the birchen-wood a chirrup, or a cock-crow in the grange.

In her utmost lightness there is truth—and often she speaks lightly—Has a grace in being gay, which even mournful souls approve, For the root of some grave earnest thought is understruck so rightly As to justify the foliage and the waving flowers above.

And she talked on—we talked, rather! upon all things—substance—shadow—Of the sheep that browsed the grasses—of the reapers in the corn—Of the little children from the schools, seen winding through the meadow—Of the poor rich world beyond them, still kept poorer by its scorn.

So, of men, and so, of letters—books are men of higher stature, And the only men that speak aloud for future times to hearSo, of mankind in the abstract, which grows slowly into nature, Yet will lift the cry of "progress," as it trod from sphere to sphere.

And her custom was to praise me when I said,—"The Age culls simples, With a broad clown's back turned broadly to the glory of the stars. We are gods by our own reck'ning,—and may well shut up the temples, And wield on, amid the incense-steam, the thunder of our cars.

"For we throw out acclamations of self-thanking, self-admiring, With, at every mile run faster,—'O the wondrous, wondrous age,' Little thinking if we work our souls as nobly as our iron,—Or if angels will commend us at the goal of pilgrimage.

"Why, what is this patient entrance into nature's deep resources, But the child's most gradual learning to walk upright without bane?—When we drive out, from the cloud of steam, majestical white horses, Are we greater than the first men who led black ones by the mane?

"If we trod the deeps of ocean, if we struck the stars in rising, If we wrapped the globe intensely with one hot electric breath, 'Twere but power within our *tether*—no new spirit-power comprising—And in life we were not greater men nor bolder men in death."

She was patient with my talking; and I loved her—loved her, certes, As I loved all heavenly objects, with uplifted eyes and hands! As I loved pure inspirations—loved the graces, loved the virtues,—In a Love content with writing his own name, on desert sands.

Or at least I thought so, purely !—thought, no idiot Hope was raising Any crown to crown Love's silence—silent Love that sate alone—Out, alas! the stag is like me—he, that tries to go on grazing With the great deep gun-wound in his neck, then reels with sudden moan.

It was thus I reeled! I told you that her hand had many suitors—But she smiles them down imperially, as Venus did the waves, And with such a gracious coldness, that they cannot press their futures On the present of her courtesy which yieldingly enslaves.

And this morning, as I sate alone within the inner chamber With the great saloon beyond it, lost in pleasant thought serene—For I had been reading Camoëns—that poem you remember, Which his lady's eyes are praised in, as the sweetest ever seen.

And the book lay open, and my thought flew from it, taking from it A vibration and impulsion to an end beyond its own,—
As the branch of a green osier, when a child would overcome it,
Springs up freely from his clasping, and goes swinging in the sun.

As I mused I heard a murmur,—it grew deep as it grew longer—Speakers using earnest language—"Lady Geraldine, you would!" And I heard a voice that pleaded ever on, in accents stronger As a sense of reason gave it power to make its rhetoric good.

Well I knew that voice—it was an earl's, of soul that matched his station—Of a soul complete in lordship—might and right read on his brow; Very finely courteous—far too proud to doubt his domination Of the common people,—he atones for grandeur by a bow.

High straight forehead, nose of eagle, cold blue eyes, of less expression Than resistance,—coldly casting off the looks of other men, As steel, arrows,—unelastic lips, which seem to taste possession, And be cautious lest the common air should injure or distrain.

For the rest, accomplished, upright,—ay, and standing by his order With a bearing not ungraceful; fond of art and letters too; Just a good man made a proud man,—as the sandy rocks that border A wild coast, by circumstances, in a regnant ebb and flow.

Thus, I knew that voice—I heard it—and I could not help the hearkening. In the room I stood up blindly, and my burning heart within Seemed to see the and fuse my senses, till they ran on all sides darkening, And scorched, weighed, like melted metal, round my feet that stood therein.

And that voice, I heard it pleading, for love's sake—for wealth, position... For the sake of liberal uses, and great actions to be done—And she interrupted gently—"Nay, my lord, the old tradition Of your Normans, by some worthier hand than mine is, should be won."

"Ah, that white hand!" he said quickly,—and in his he either drew it Or attempted—for with gravity and instance she replied—
"Nay, indeed, my lord, this talk is vain, and we had best eschew it, And pass on, like friends, to other points less easy to decide."

What he said again, I know not. It is likely that his trouble Worked his pride up to the surface, for she answered in slow scorn—
"And your lordship judges rightly. Whom I marry, shall be noble, Ay and wealthy. I shall never blush to think how he was born."

There, I maddened! her words stung me! Life swept through me into fever, And my soul sprang up astonished; sprang, full-statured in an hour. Know you what it is when anguish, with apocalyptic NEVER, To a Pythian height dilates you,—and despair sublimes to power?

From my brain, the soul-wings budded,—waved a flame about my body, Whence conventions coiled to ashes. I felt self-drawn out, as man, From amalgamate false natures; and I saw the skies grow ruddy With the deepening feet of angels, and I knew what spirits can.

I was mad—inspired—say either! anguish worketh inspiration!
Was a man, or beast—perhaps so; for the tiger roars, when speared!
And I walked on, step by step, along the level of my passion—
Oh my soul! and passed the doorway to her face, and never feared.

He had left her,—peradventure, when my footstep proved my coming—But for her—she half arose, then sate—grew scarlet and grew pale: Oh, she trembled!—'tis so always with a worldly man or woman In the presence of true spirits—what else can they do but quail?

Oh, she fluttered like a tame bird, in among its forest-brothers Far too strong for it! then drooping, bowed her face upon her hands—And I spake out wildly, fiercely, brutal truths of her and others! I, she planted in the desert, swathed her, windlike, with my sands.

I plucked up her social fictions, bloody-rooted though leaf-verdant,— Trod them down with words of shaming,—all the purple and the gold. And the "landed stakes" and lordships—all, that spirits pure and ardent Are cast out of love and honour, because chancing not to hold.

"For myself I do not argue," said I, "though I love you, Madam, But for better souls that nearer to the height of yours have trod—And this age shows, to my thinking, still more infidels to Adam, Than directly, by profession, simple infidels to God.

"Yet, O God" (I said), "O grave" (I said), "O mother's heart and bosom, With whom first and last are equal, saint and corpse and little child!

We are fools to your deductions, in these figments of heart-closing! We are traitors to your causes, in these sympathies defiled!

"Learn more reverence, Madam, not for rank or wealth—that needs no learning!

That comes quickly—quick as sin does! ay, and often works to sin;
But for Adam's seed, MAN! Trust me, 'tis a clay above your scorning,
With God's image stamped upon it, and God's kindling breath within,

"What right have you, Madam, gazing in your palace mirror daily, Getting so, by heart, your beauty, which all others must adore, While you draw the golden ringlets down your fingers, to vow gaily You will wed no man that's only good to God,—and nothing more?

"Why, what right have you, made fair by that same God—the sweetest woman

Of all women He has fashioned—with your lovely spirit-face, Which would seem too near to vanish if its smile were not so human,—And your voice of holy sweetness, turning common words to grace;

"What right can you have, God's other works to scorn, despise, . . . revile them

In the gross, as mere men, broadly—not as *noble* men, forsooth,— As mere pariahs of the outer world, forbidden to assoil them In the hope of living,—dying,—near that sweetness of your mouth?

"Have you any answer, Madam? If my spirit were less earthy—. If its instrument were gifted with a better silver string— I would kneel down where I stand, and say—'Behold me! I am worthy Of thy loving, for I love thee! I am worthy as a king.'

"As it is—your ermined pride, I swear, shall feel this stain upon her, That I, poor, weak, tost with passion, scorned by me and you again, Love you, Madam—dare to love you—to my grief and your dishonour—To my endless desolation, and your impotent disdain!"

More mad words like these—mere madness! friend, I need not write them fuller.

For I hear my hot soul dropping on the lines in showers of tears—Oh, a woman! friend, a woman! Why, a beast had scarce been duller Than roar bestial loud complaints against the shining of the spheres.

But at last there came a pause. I stood all vibrating with thunder Which my soul had used. The silence drew her face up like a call. Could you guess what word she uttered? She looked up, as if in wonder, With tears beaded on her lashes, and said "Bertram!" it was all.

If she had cursed me—and she might have—or if even, with queenly bearing Which at need is used by women, she had risen up and said, "Sir, you are my guest, and therefore I have given you a full hearing—Now, beseech you, choose a name exacting somewhat less, instead—"

I had borne it !—but that "Bertram"—why it lies there on the paper A mere word, without her accent,—and you cannot judge the weight Of the calm which crushed my passion! I seemed swimming in a vapour,—And her gentleness destroyed me whom her scorn made desolate.

So, struck backward and exhausted with that inward flow of passion Which had rushed on, sparing nothing, into forms of abstract truth,—With a logic agonising through unseemly demonstration—And with youth's own anguish turning grimly grey the hairs of youth,—

With the sense accursed and instant, that if even I spake wisely I spake basely—using truth,—if what I spake, indeed, was true—To avenge wrong on a woman—her, who sate there weighing nicely A poor manhood's worth, found guilty of such deeds as I could do!—

With such wrong and woe exhausted—what I suffered and occasioned,—As a wild horse through a city runs with lightning in his eyes,
And then dashing at a church's cold and passive wall, impassioned,
Strikes the death into his burning brain, and blindly drops and dies—

So I fell, struck down before her! Do you blame me, friend, for weakness? Twas my strength of passion slew me!—fell before her like a stone! Fast the dreadful world rolled from me, on its roaring wheels of blackness—When the light came I was lying in this chamber, and alone.

Oh, of course, she charged her lacqueys to bear out the sickly burden, And to cast it from her scornful sight—but not beyond the gate—She is too kind to be cruel, and too haughty not to pardon Such a man as I—'twere something to be level to her hate.

But for me—you now are conscious why, my friend, I write this letter,—How my life is read all backward, and the charm of life undone! I shall leave her house at dawn—I would to-night, if I were better—And I charge my soul to hold my body strengthened for the sun.

When the sun has dyed the oriel, I depart with no last gazes, No weak moanings—one word only, left in writing for her hands,—Out of reach of her derision and some unavailing praises, To make front against this anguish in the far and foreign lands.

Blame me not; I would not squander life in grief—I am abstemious; I but nurse my spirit's falcon, that its wing may soar again. There's no room for tears of weakness in the blind eyes of a Phemius: Into work the poet kneads them,—and he does not die *till then*.

CONCLUSION

Bertram finished the last pages, while along the silence ever Still in hot and heavy splashes, fell his tears on every leaf: Having ended he leans backward in his chair, with lips that quiver From the deep unspoken, ay, and deep unwritten thoughts of grief.

Soh! how still the lady standeth! 'tis a dream—a dream of mercies! 'Twixt the purple lattice-curtains, how she standeth still and pale! 'Tis a vision, sure, of mercies, sent to soften his self-curses—Sent to sweep a patient quiet o'er the tossing of his wail.

"Eyes," he said, "now throbbing through me! are ye eyes that did undo me?

Shining eyes, like antique jewels set in Parian statue-stone! Underneath that calm white forehead, are ye ever burning torrid, O'er the desolate sand-desert of my heart and life undone?"

With a murmurous stir uncertain, in the air, the purple curtain Swelleth in and swelleth out around her motionless pale brows, While the gliding of the river sends a rippling noise for ever Through the open casement whitened by the moonlight's slant repose.

Said he—"Vision of a lady! stand there silent, stand there steady! Now I see it plainly, plainly; now I cannot hope or doubt—
There, the brows of mild repression—there, the lips of silent passion,
Curved like an archer's bow to send the bitter arrows out."

Ever, evermore the while in a slow silence she kept smiling .-And approached him slowly, slowly, in a gliding measured pace; With her two white hands extended, as if praying one offended, And a look of supplication, gazing earnest in his face.

Said he-" Wake me by no gesture, -sound of breath, or stir of vesture ; Let the blessed apparition melt not yet to its divine! No approaching—hush! no breathing! or my heart must swoon to death in The too utter life thou bringest—O thou dream of Geraldine!"

Ever, evermore the while in a slow silence she kept smiling-But the tears ran over lightly from her eyes, and tenderly: "Dost thou, Bertram, truly love me? Is no woman far above me Found more worthy of thy poet-heart than such a one as $I \geq "$

Said he-" I would dream so ever, like the flowing of that river. Flowing ever in a shadow greenly onward to the sea! So, thou vision of all sweetness—princely to a full completeness,— Would my heart and life flow onward—deathward—through this dream of THEE!"

Ever, evermore the while in a slow silence she kept smiling,— While the silver tears ran faster down the blushing of her cheeks: Then with both her hands enfolding both of his, she softly told him, "Bertram, if I say I love thee, . . . 'tis the vision only speaks."

Softened, quickened to adore her, on his knee he fell before her-And she whispered low in triumph—" It shall be as I have sworn! Very rich he is in virtues, -very noble, -noble, certes; And I shall not blush in knowing that men call him lowly born."

A LAMENT FOR ADONIS

FROM BION

I MOURN for Adonis -- Adonis is dead! Fair Adonis is dead, and the Loves are lamenting.

Sleep, Cypris, no more, on thy purplestrewed bed;

thy breast unrelenting. And shriek to the worlds, "Fair

Adonis is dead."

I mourn for Adonis-the Loves are lamenting. He lies on the hills in his beauty

and death.-

The white tusk of a boar has transpierced his white thigh!

Cytherea grows mad at his thin gasping breath,

While the black blood drips down on the pale ivory:

And his eyeballs lie quenched with Gather up the red flower of her blood the weight of his brows.

The rose fades from his lips, and upon them just parted

The kiss dies the goddess consents not to lose.

Though the kiss of the Dead cannot make her glad-hearted-

He knows not who kisses him dead in the dews.

Arise, wretch stoled in black, beat I mourn for Adonis-the Loves are lamenting.

Deep, deep in the thigh, is Adonis's wound.

But a deeper, is Cypris's bosom presenting-

The youth lieth dead while his dogs howl around, And the nymphs weep aloud from the

mists of the hill,—

And the poor Aphrodite, with tresses unbound,

All dishevelled, unsandalled, shricks mournful and shrill

Through the dusk of the groves. The thorns, tearing her feet,

which is holy,

Each footstep she takes, - and the valleys repeat

The sharp cry which she utters, and draw it out slowly.

She calls on her spouse, her Assy-

rian,-on him

blood spreads over his body-The chest taking hue from the gash

in the limb.

And the bosom once ivory, turning to ruddy.

Ah, ah, Cytherca! the Loves are lamenting.

She lost her fair spouse, and so lost her fair smile-

When he lived she was fair by the whole world's consenting,

Whose fairness is dead with him! woe worth the while!

All the mountains above and the oaklands below

Murmur, ah, ah, Adonis! the streams overflow

Aphroditè's deep wail, -river-fountains in pity

Weep soft in the hills, and the flowers. as they blow,

Redden outward with sorrow, while all hear her go

With the song of her sadness through mountain and city.

Ah, ah, Cytherea! Adonis is dead: Fair Adonis is dead-Echo answers, Adonis!

Who weeps not for Cypris, when bowing her head

She stares at the wound where it gapes and astonies?

-When, ah, ah!-she saw how the blood ran away And empurpled the thigh, and,

with wild hands flung out, Said with sobs, "Stay, Adonis! un-

happy one, stay,-

Let me feel thee once more-let me ring thee about

With the clasp of my arms, and press kiss into kiss!

Wait a little, Adonis, and kiss me again,

For the last time, beloved, -and but so much of this

That the kiss may learn life from the warmth of the strain!

-Till thy breath shall exude from thy soul to my mouth,

To my heart, -and the love-charm I once more receiving,

Her own youth, while the dark May drink thy love in it, and keep, of

That one kiss in the place of Adonis the living. Thou fliest me, mournful one, fliest

me far. My Adonis, and seekest the Ache-

ron portal,-

To Hell's cruel King goest down with a scar. While I weep and live on like a

wretched immortal, And follow no step!—O Persephonè.

take him. My husband !-thou'rt better and

brighter than I, So all beauty flows down to thee! I

cannot make him Look up at my grief,-there's des-

pair in my cry, Since I wail for Adonis, who died to me . . . died to me . . .

-Then I fear thee !-Art thou dead. my Adored?

Passion ends like a dream in the sleep that's denied to me. -

Cypris is widowed, -the Loves seek their lord

All the house through in vain! Charm of cestus has ceased With thy clasp !—O too bold in the

hunt past preventing,

Ay, mad: thou so fair . . . to have strife with a beast!"-

Thus the goddess wailed on-and the Loves are lamenting.

Ah, ah, Cytherea! Adonis is dead.— She wept tear after tear, with the blood which was shed.-

And both turned into flowers for the earth's garden-close;

Her tears, to the wind flower.—his blood, to the rose.

I mourn for Adonis—Adonis is dead. Weep no more in the woods, Cytherea, thy lover !

So, well! make a place for his corse in thy bed,

With the purples thou sleepest in, under and over.

He's fair though a corse—a fair corse
... like a sleeper—

Lay soft in the silks he had pleasure to fold,

When, beside thee at night, holy dreams deep and deeper

Enclosed his young life on the couch made of gold!

Love him still, poor Adonis! cast on him together

The crowns and the flowers! since he died from the place,

Why let all die with him—let the blossoms go wither;

Rain myrtles and olive-buds down on his face!

Rain the myrrh down, let all that is best fall a-pining,

Since the myrrh of his life from thy keeping is swept!—

—Pale he lay, thine Adonis, in purples reclining,—

The Loves raised their voices around him and wept.

They have shorn their bright curls off to cast on Adonis:

One treads on his bow,—on his arrows, another,—

One breaks up a well-feathered quiver; and one is

Bent low at a sandal, untying the strings,

And one carries the vases of gold from the springs,

While one washes the wound,—and behind them a brother

Fans down on the body sweet airs with his wings.

VIII

Cytherea herself, now, the Loves are lamenting.

Each torch at the door Hymenæus blew out, And the marriage-wreath dropping its

leaves as repenting,
No more "Hymen, Hymen," is

chanted about,
But the ai ai instead—"ai alas" is

For Adonis, and then follows "ai __ Hymenæus!"

The Graces are weeping for Cinyris' son,

Sobbing low, each to each, "His fair eyes cannot see us!"—

Their wail strikes more shrill than the sadder Dionè's!

The Fates mourn aloud for Adonis, Adonis,

Deep chanting! he hears not a word that they say:

He would hear, but Persephone has him in keeping.

 Cease moan, Cytherea—leave pomps for to-day,

And weep new when a new year refits thee for weeping.

A VISION OF POETS

"O sacred Essence, lighting me this hour, How may I lightly stile thy great power: Echo. Power.

Power! but of whence? under the greenwood spraye? Or liv'st in Heaven? saye.

Echo. In Heavens aye! tell, may I it obtayne
By alms, by fasting, prayer,—by paine?
Echo. By paine.

Show me the paine, it shall be undergone: I to mine end will still go on.

Echo. Go on."

—Britannia's Pastorals.

A POET could not sleep aright, For his soul kept up too much light Under his eyelids for the night.

And thus he rose disquieted
With sweet rhymes ringing through
his head.

And in the forest wandered,—

Where, sloping up the darkest glades, The moon had drawn long colonnades, Upon whose floor the verdure fades

To a faint silver,—pavement fair
The antique wood-nymphs scarce
would dare

To footprint o'er, had such been there,

And rather sit by breathlessly, With fear in their large eyes to see The consecrated sight. But HE—

The poet—who with spirit-kiss Familiar, had long claimed for his Whatever earthly beauty is,—

Who also in his spirit bore A Beauty passing the earth's store, Walked calmly onward evermore. His aimless thoughts in metre went, Like a babe's hand without intent Drawn down a seven-stringed instrument.

Nor jarred it with his humour, as. With a faint stirring down the grass, An apparition fair did pass.

He might have feared another time, But all things fair and strange did chime

With his thoughts then—as rhyme to rhyme.

An angel had not startled him, Alighted from Heaven's burning rim To breathe from glory in the Dim—

Much less a lady, riding slow Upon a palfrey white as snow, And smooth as a snow-cloud could go.

Full upon his she turned her face,—
"What ho, sir poet! dost thou pace
Our woods at night, in ghostly chace

"Of some fair Dryad of old tales, Whochaunts between the nightingales, And over sleep by song prevails?"

She smiled; but he could see arise Her soul from far adown her eyes, Prepared as if for sacrifice.

She looked a queen who seemeth gay From royal grace alone; "Now, nay," He answered,—" slumber passed away,

"Compelled by instincts in my head, That I should see to-night instead Of a fair nymph, some fairer Dread."

She looked up quickly to the sky, And spake:—"The moon's regality Will hear no praise! she is as I.

"She is in heaven, and I on earth; This is my kingdom—I come forth To crown all poets to their worth."

He brake in with a voice that

"To their worth, lady? They are scorned

By men they sing for, till inurned.

"To their worth? Beauty in the

Leaves the hearth cold,—and loverefined

Ambitions make the world unkind.

"The boor who ploughs the daisy down,

The chief whose mortage of renown, Fixed upon graves, has bought a crown—

"Both these are happier, more approved,
Than poets!—Why should I be

moved
In saying . . . both are more beloved?"

"The south can judge not of the north,"

She resumed calmly—" I come forth To crown all poets to their worth.

"Yea, verily! to anoint them all With blessed oils, which surely shall Smell sweeter as the ages fall."

"As sweet." the poet said, and rung A low sad laugh, "as flowers do, sprung Out of their graves when they die

young.

"As sweet as window eglantine— Some bough of which, as they decline, The hired nurse gathers at their sign.

"As sweet, in short, as perfumed shroud,

Which the fair Roman maidens sewed For English Keats singing aloud."

The lady answered, "Yea, as sweet! The things thou namest being complete

In fragrance, as I measure it.

"Since sweet the death-clothes and the knell

Of him who; having lived, dies well,—And holy sweet the asphodel,

"Stirred softly by that foot of his, When he treads brave on all that is, Into the world of souls, from this!

"Since sweet the tears, dropped at the door Of tearless Death,—and even before;

Of tearless Death,—and even before; Sweet, consecrated evermore!

"What! dost thou judge it a strange thing,

That poets, crowned for vanquishing, Should bear some dust from out the ring?

"Come on with me, come on with me; And learn in coming. Let me free Thy spirit into verity."

She ceased: her palfrey's paces sent
No separate noises as she went,—
'Twas a bee's hum—a little spent.

And while the poet seemed to tread Along the drowsy noise so made, The forest heaved up overhead

Its billowy foliage through the air, And the calm stars did far and spare, O'erswim the masses everywhere,—

Save when the overtopping pines Did bar their tremulous light with lines

All fixed and black. Now the moon shines

A broader glory. You may see The trees grow rarer presently,— The air blows up more fresh and free.

Until they come from dark to light, And from the forest to the sight Of the large Heaven-heart, bare with night,—

A fiery throb in every star, Those burning arteries that are The conduits of God's life afar,—

A wild brown moorland underneath, And four pools breaking up the heath With white low gleanings, blank as death.

Beside the first pool, near the wood, A dead tree in set horror stood, Peeled and disjointed, stark as rood;

Since thunder-stricken, years ago, Fixed in the spectral strain and throe Wherewith its truggled from the blow:

A monumental tree, alone, That will not bend in storms nor groan, But break off sudden like a stone.—

Its lifeless shadow lies oblique Upon the pool,—where, javelin-like, The star-rays quiver while they strike.

"Drink," said the lady, very still—
"Be holy and cold." He did her will,
And drank the starry water chill.

The next pool they came near unto, Was bare of trees: there, only grew Straight flags and lilies, just a few, Which sullen on the water sate, And leant their faces on the flat, As weary of the starlight-state.

"Drink," said the lady, grave and slow—

"World's use behoveth thee to know." He drank the bitter wave below.

The third pool, girt with thorny bushes.

And flaunting weeds, and reeds and rushes

That winds sang through in mournful gushes,

Was whitely smeared in many a round By a slow slime: the starlight swound Over the ghastly light it found.

"Drink," said the lady, sad and slow-

"World's love behoveth thee to know."
He looked to her, commanding so.

Her brow was troubled, but her eye Struck clear to his soul. For all reply He drank the water suddenly,—

Then, with a deathly sickness, passed Beside the fourth pool and the last, Where weights of shadow were downcast

From yew and alder, and rank trails Of nightshade clasping the trunkscales,

And flung across the intervals

From yew to yew. Who dareth stoop Where those dank branches overdroop, Into his heart the chill strikes up;

He hears a silent gliding coil—
The snakes strain hard against the soil—

His foot slips in their slimy oil;

And toads seem crawling on his hand. And clinging bats, but dimly scanned, Full in his face their wings expand.

A paleness took the poet's cheek:
"Must I drink here?" he seemed to
seek

The lady's will, with utterance meek.

"Ay, ay," she said, "it so must be "—
(And this time she spake cheerfully)
"Behoves thee know World's cruelly."

He bowed his forehead till his mouth Curved in the wave, and drank unloth, As if from rivers of the south.

His lip sobbed through the water rank, His heart paused in him while he drank,

His brain beat heart-like-rose and Cloud above cloud, victoriously,sank.-

And he swooned backward to a dream, Wherein he lay 'twixt gl om and

With Death and Life at each extreme.

And spiritual thunders, born of soul Not cloud, did leap from mystic pole, And o'er him roll and counter-roll,

Crushing their echoes reboant With their own wheels. Did Heaven so grant His spirit a sign of covenant?

At last came silence. A slow kiss Did crown his forehead after this: His evelids flew back for the bliss.

The lady stood beside his head, Smiling a thought, with hair dispread: The moonshine seemed dishevelled

In her sleek tresses manifold.-Like Danae's in the rain of old, That dripped with melancholy gold.

But she was holy, pale, and high— As one who saw an ecstasy Beyond a foretold agony.

"Rise up!" said she, with voice where song

Eddied through speech—"rise up! be strong!

And learn how right avenges wrong."

The poet rose up on his feet: He stood before an altar set For sacrament, with vessels meet.

And mystic altar-lights which shine As if their flames were crystalline Carved flames that would not shrink or pine.

The altar filled the central place Of a great church, and toward its face Long aisles did shoot and interlace.

And from it a continuous mist Of incense (round the edges kissed By a pure light of amethyst)

Wound upward slowly and throbbingly,

Cloud within cloud, right silverly,

Broke full against the arched roof, And, thence refracting, eddied off, And floated through the marble woof

Of many a fine-wrought architrave. -Then, poising the white masses brave, Swept solemnly down aisle and nave.

And now in dark, and now in light, The countless columns, glimmering white.

Seemed leading out to the Infinite.

Plunged half-way up the shaft they showed.

In the pale shifting incense-cloud. Which flowed them by, and overflowed,

Till mist and marble seemed to blend, And the whole temple, at the end, With its own incense to distend,-

The arches, like a giant's bow, To bend and slacken,—and below, The niched saints to come and go.

Alone, amid the shifting scene, That central altar stood serene In its clear steadfast taper-sheen.

Then first, the poet was aware Of a chief-angel standing there Before that altar, in the glare,

His eyes were dreadful, for you saw That they saw God-his lips and jaw Grand-made and strong, as Sinai's

They could enunciate, and refrain From vibratory after-pain: And his brow's height was sovereign.

On the vast background of his wings Arose his image; and he flings. From each plumed arc, pale glitterings

And fiery flakes (as beateth more Or less, the angel-heart) before And round him, upon roof and floor. Edging with fire the shifting fumes: While at his side, 'twixt lights and glooms,

The phantasm of an organ booms.

Extending from which instrument And angel, right and left-way bent, The poet's sight grew sentient

Of a strange company around
And toward the altar,—pale and
bound,

With bay above the eyes profound.

Deathful their faces were, and yet The power of life was in them set— Never forgot, nor to forget.

Sublime significance of mouth, Dilated nostril full of youth, And forehead royal with the truth.

These faces were not multiplied Beyond your count, but side by side Did front the altar, glorified!

Still as a vision, yet exprest Full as an action—look and geste Of buried saint, in risen rest.

The poet knew them. Faint and dim His spirits seemed to sink in him, Then, like a dolphin, change and swim

The current—These were poets true, Who died for Beauty, as martyrs do For Truth—the ends being scarcely

God's prophets of the Beautiful These poets were—of iron rule, The rugged cilix, serge of wool.

Here, Homer, with the broad suspense

Of thunderous brows, and lips intense Of garrulous god-innocence.

There, Shakespeare! on whose forehead climb

The crowns o' the World. Oh, eyes sublime—

With tears and laughters for all time! Here, Æschylus,—the women swooned

To see so awful, when he frowned As the gods did!—he standeth crowned.

Euripides, with close and mild Scholastic lips,—that could be wild, And laugh or sob out like a child, Even in the classes. Sophocles, With that king's look which, down the trees,

Followed the dark effigies

Of the lost Theban. Hesiod old, Who, somewhat blind and deaf and cold,

Cared most for gods and bulls. And bold

Electric Pindar, quick as fear, With race-dust on his cheeks, and clear

Slant startled eyes that seem to hear

The chariot rounding the last goal, To hurtle past it in his soul. And Sappho, crowned with gloriole

Of ebon hair on calmed brows— O poet-woman! none foregoes The leap, attaining the repose!

Theocritus, with glittering locks Dropt sideway, as betwixt the rocks He watched the visionary flocks.

And Aristophanes, who took
The world with mirth, and laughterstruck

The hollow caves of Thought and woke

The infinite echoes hid in each. And Virgil: shade of Mantuan beech Did help the shade of bay to reach

And knit around his forehead high;— For his gods wore less majesty Than his brown bees hummed deathlessly.

Lucretius—nobler than his mood:
Who dropped his plummet down the
broad

Deep universe, and said " No God,"

Finding no bottom: he denied Divinely the divine, and died Chief poet on the Tiber-side,

By grace of God! his face is stern As one compelled, in spite of scorn, To teach a truth he could not learn.

And Ossian, dimly seen or guessed: Once counted greater than the rest, When mountain-winds blew out his

And Spenser drooped his dreaming head

From his own verse engendered)

On Ariosto's, till they ran Their curts in one.-The Italian Shot nimbler heat of bolder man

From his fine lids. And Dante stern And sweet, whose spirit was an urn For wine and milk, poured out in turn.

Hard-souled Alfieri: and fancywilled

Boiardo,-who with laughter filled The pauses of the jostled shield.

And Berni, with a hand stretched out To sleek that storm. And not without

The wreath he died in, and the doubt He died by, Tasso! bard and lover,

Whose visions were too thin to cover The face of a false woman over.

And soft Racine,-and grave Corneille-

The orator of rhymes, whose wail Scarce shook his purple. And Petrarch pale,

From whose brainlighted heart were thrown

A thousand thoughts beneath the sun. Each lucid with the name of One.

And Camoens, with that look he had, Compelling India's Genius sad From the wave through the Lusiad,—

The murmurs of the storm-cape ocean

Indrawn in vibrative emotion Along the verse. And while devotion

In his wild eyes fantastic shone Under the tonsure blown upon By airs celestial, -Calderon.

And bold De Vega,—who breathed quick

Verse after verse, till death's old trick Put pause to life and rhetoric.

And fell from inner entity.

And Schiller, with heroic front Too large for wreath of modern wont.

(With languid sleep-smile you had And Chaucer, with his infantine Familiar clasp of things divine-That mark upon his lip is wine.

Here, Milton's eyes strike piercing-

The shapes of suns and stars did swim Like clouds from them, and granted

God for sole vision. Cowley, there: Whose active fancy debonair Drew straws like amber-foul to fair.

Drayton and Browne, -with smiles they drew

From outward Nature, still kept new From their own inward nature true.

And Marlowe, Webster, Fletcher, Ben-

Whose fire-hearts sowed our furrows. when

The world was worthy of such men.

And Burns, with pungent passionings Set in his eyes. Deep lyric springs Are of the fire-mount's issuings.

And Shelley, in his white ideal, All statue blind! And Keats the real Adonis, with the hymeneal

Fresh vernal buds half sunk between His youthful curls, kissed straight and

In his Rome-grave, by Venus queen.

And poor, proud Byron,-sad as grave,

And salt as life: forlornly brave, And quivering with the dart he drave.

And visionary Coleridge, who Did sweep his thoughts as angels do Their wings, with cadence up the Blue.

These poets fixed (and other more) The lighted altar booming o'er The clouds of incense dim and hoar:

And all their faces, in the lull And Coethe-with that reaching eve Of natural things, looked wonderful His soul reached out from, far and With life and death and deathless rule.

All, still as stone, and yet intense; As if by spirit's vehemence Worthy of Plutarch's kiss upon't, - That stone were carved, and not by sense.

But where the heart of each should beat.

There seemed a wound instead of it, From whence the blood dropped to their feet.

Drop after drop—dropped heavily, As century follows century Into the deep eternity.

Then said the lady—and her word Came distant,—as wide waves were stirred

Between her and the ear that heard,—

"World's use is cold—world's love is vain,—

World's cruelty is bitter bane; But pain is not the fruit of pain.

"Hearken, O poet, whom I led From the dark wood! Dismissing dread,

Now hear this angel in my stead.

"His organ's clavier strikes along
These poets' hearts, sonorous, strong,
They gave him without count of
wrong,—

"A diapason whence to guide
Up to God's feet, from these who
died,

An anthem fully glorified.

" Whereat God's blessing . . IBARAK (יברך)

Breathes back this music—folds it back

About the earth in vapoury rack:

"And men walk in it, crying 'Lo! The world is wider, and we know The very heavens look brighter so.

"'The stars move statelier round the edge

Of the silver spheres, and give in pledge

Their light for nobler privilege.

"'No little flower but joys or grieves—

Full life is rustling in the sheaves,— Full spirit sweeps the forestleaves.'

"So works this music on the earth; God so admits it, sends it forth, To add another worth to worth—

"A new creation-bloom that rounds The old creation, and expounds His Beautiful in tuneful sounds.

"Now hearken!" Then the poet gazed

Upon the angel glorious-faced, Whose hand, majestically raised,

Floated across the organ-keys, Like a pale moon o'er murmuring seas, With no touch but with influences.

Then rose and fell (with swell and swound

Of shapeless noises wandering round A concord which at last they found)

Those mystic keys—the tones were mixed,

Dim, faint, and thrilled and throbbed betwixt

The incomplete and the unfixed:

And therein mighty minds were heard In mighty musings, inly stirred, And struggling outward for a word.

Until these surges, having run This way and that, gave out as one An Aphroditè of sweet tune,—

A Harmony, that, finding vent, Upward in grand ascension went. Winged to a heavenly argument—

Up, upward! like a saint who strips The shroud back from his eyes and lips,

And rises in apocalypse.

A harmony sublime and plain, Which cleft (as flying swan, the rain,— Throwing the drops off with a strain

Of her white wing) those undertones

Of perplext chords, and soared at once And struck out from the starry thrones

Their several silver octaves as It passed to God. The music was Of divine stature—strong to pass.

And those who heard it, understood Something of life in spirit and blood— Something of nature's fair and good.

And while it sounded, those great souls

Did thrill as racers at the goals, And burn in all their aureoles.

But she, the lady, as vapour-bound, Stood calmly in the joy of sound,— Like Nature with the showers around.

And when it ceased, the blood which fell,

Again, alone grew audible, Tolling the silence as a bell.

The sovran angel lifted high His hand, and spake out sovranly— 'Tried poets, hearken and reply!

"Give me true answers. If we grant That not to suffer, is to want The conscience of the jubilant,—

"If ignorance of anguish is But ignorance,—and mortals miss Far prospects, by a level bliss,—

"If, as two colours must be viewed In a visible image, mortals should Need good and evil, to see good,—

"If to speak nobly, comprehends To feel profoundly—if the ends Of power and suffering, Nature blends,—

"If poets on the tripod must Writhe like the Pythian, to make just Their oracles, and merit trust,—

"If every vatic word that sweeps To change the world, must pale their lips,

And leave their own souls in eclipse,—

"If to search deep the universe
Must pierce the searcher with the
curse,—

Because that bolt (in man's reverse),

"Was shot to the heart o' the wood, and lies

Wedged deepest in the best,—if eyes That look for visions and surprise

"From influent angels, must shut down

Their lids first, upon sun and moon, The head asleep upon a stone,—

"If ONE Who did redeem you back, By His own loss, from final wrack, Did consecrate by touch and track

"Those temporal sorrows, till the taste

Of brackish waters of the waste Is salt with tears He dropt too fast,— "If all the crowns of earth must wound

With prickings of the thorns He found,—

If saddest sighs swell sweetest sound,—

"What say ye unto this?—refuse This baptism in salt water?—choose Calm breasts, mute lips, and labour loose?

"Or, oh ye gifted givers! ye Who give your liberal hearts to me, To make the world this harmony,—

"Are ye resigned that they be spent To such world's help?"—

The Spirits bent Their awful brows and said—"Content."

Content! it sounded like Amen, Said by a choir of mourning men— An affirmation full of pain

And patience,—ay, of glorying And adoration,—as a king Might seal an oath for governing.

Then said the angel—and his face Lightened abroad, until the place Grew larger for a moment's space,—

The long aisles flashing out in light, And nave and transept, columns white, And arches crossed, being clear to sight

As if the roof were off and all Stood in the noon-sun,—"Lo! I call To other hearts as liberal.

"This pedal strikes out in the air: My instrument has room to bear Still fuller strains and perfecter.

"Herein is room, and shall be room While Timelasts, for new hearts to come

Consummating while they consume.

"What living man will bring a gift Of his own heart, and help to lift The tune?—The race is to the swift."

So asked the angel. Straight the while,

A company came up the aisle
With measured step and sorted
smile,—

Cleaving the incense-clouds that rise, With winking unaccustomed eyes, And love-locks smelling sweet of spice.

One bore his head above the rest, As if the world were dispossessed— And One did pillow chin on breast,

Right languid—an as he should faint. One shook his curls across his paint, And moralised on worldly taint.

One, slanting up his face, did wink
The salt rheum to the eyelid's brink,
To think—O gods! or—not to
think!

Some trod out stealthily and slow, As if the sun would fall in snow, If they walked to instead of fro.

And some with conscious ambling free,

Did shake their bells right daintily On hand and foot, for harmony.

And some composing sudden sighs In attitudes of point-device, Rehearsed impromptu agonies.

And when this company drew near The spirits crowned, it might appear Submitted to a ghastly fear.

As a same eye in master-passion Constrains a maniac to the fashion Of hideous maniac imitation.

In the least geste—the dropping low O'thelid—the wrinkling of the brow,— Exaggerate with mock and mow,—

So, mastered was that company By the crowned vision utterly, Swayed to a maniac mockery.

One dulled his eyeballs, as they ached With Homer's forehead—though he lacked

An inch of any. And one racked

His lower lip with restless tooth,—
As Pindar's rushing words forsooth
Were pent behind it. One, his
smooth

Pink cheeks did rumple passionate, Like Æschylus—and tried to prate On trolling tongue, of fate and fate.

One set her eyes like Sappho's—or Any light woman's! one forbore Like Dante, or any man as poor In mirth, to let a smile undo
His hard shut lips. And one, that
drew

Sour humours from his mother, blew

His sunken cheeks out to the size Of most unnatural jollities, Because Anacreon looked jest-wise.

So with the rest.—It was a sight A great world-laughter would requite, Or great world-wrath, with equal right!

Out came a speaker from that crowd To speak for all—in sleek and proud Exordial periods, while he bowed

His knee before the angel.—"Thus, O angel, who hast called for us, We bring thee service emulous,—

" Fit service from sufficient soul— Hand-service, to receive world's dole— Lip-service, in world's ear to roll

"Adjusted concords—soft enow To hear the wine-cups passing, through, And not too grave to spoil the show.

"Thou, certes, when thou askest more, O sapient angel, leanest o'er The window-sill of metaphor.

"To give our hearts up! fie!—That rage
Barbaric antedates the age.
It is not done on any stage.

"Because your scald or gleeman went With seven- or nine-stringed instrument

Upon his back—must ours be bent?

"We are not pilgrims, by your leave? No, nor yet martyrs! if we grieve, It is to rhyme to . . . summer eve,

"And if we labour, it shall be As suiteth best with our degree, In after-dinner reverie."

More yet that speaker would have said,—

Poising, between his smiles fair-fed, Each separate phrase till finished.

But all the foreheads of those born And dead true poets flashed with scorn Betwixt the bay leaves round them wornAv. jetted such brave fire, that they, The new-come, shrank and paled away, Like leaden ashes when the day

Strikes on the hearth. A spirit-blast, A presence known by power, at last Took them up mutely-they had But what he said, I do not know. passed.

And he, our pilgrim-poet, saw Only their places, in deep awe,-What time the angel's smile did draw

His gazing upward. Smiling on, The angel in the angel shone, Revealing glory in benison.

Till, ripened in the light which shut The poet in, his spirit mute Dropped sudden, as a perfect fruit.

He fell before the angel's feet. Saying-" If what is true is sweet, In something I may compass it.

- "For, where my worthiness is poor, My will stands richly at the door, To pay short-comings evermore.
- " Accept me therefore-Not for price, And not for pride, my sacrifice Is tendered! for my soul is nice,
- "And will beat down those dusty seeds Of bearded corn, if she succeeds In soaring while the covey feeds.
- "I soar-I am drawn up like the lark To its white cloud. So high my mark. Albeit my wing is small and dark.
- " I ask no wages-seek no fame. Sew me, for shroud round face and name. God's banner of the oriflamme.
- "I only would have leave to loose (In tears and blood, if so He choose) Mine inward music out to use.
- " I only would be spent-in pain And loss, perchance—but not in vain, Upon the sweetness of that strain,-
- "Only project, beyond the bound Of mine own life, so lost and found, My voice, and live on in its sound,-
- "Only embrace and be embraced By fiery ends,-whereby to waste, And light God's future with my past."

The angel's smile grew more divine-The mortal speaking-ay, its shine Swelled fuller, like a choir-note fine.

Till the broad glory round his brow, Did vibrate with the light below ;

Nor know I if the man who prayed. Rose up accepted, unforbade, From the church-floor where he was laid.-

Nor if a listening life did run Through the king-poets, one by one Rejoicing in a worthy son.

My soul, which might have seen, grew blind

By what it looked on: I can find No certain count of things behind.

I saw alone, dim white and grand As in a dream, the angel's hand Stretched forth in gesture of command

Straight through the haze-And so. as erst.

A strain more noble than the first Mused in the organ, and outburst.

With giant march, from floor to roof Rose the full notes, -now parted off In pauses massively aloof,

Like measured thunders,—now reioined In concords of mysterious kind

Which fused together sense and mind,-

Now flashing sharp on sharp along Exultant, in a mounting throng,-Now dying off to a low song

Fed upon minors!—wavelike sounds Re-eddying into silver rounds. Enlarging liberty with bounds.

And everyrhythm that seemed to close Survived in confluent underflows Symphonious with the next that rose.

Thus the whole strain being multiplied And greatened,—with its glorified Wings shot abroad from side to side. —

Waved backward (as a wind might

A Brocken mist, and with as brave Wild roaring) arch and architrave. Aisle, transept, column, marble wall,— Then swelling outward, prodigal Of aspiration beyond thrall,

Soared,—and drew up with it the whole

Of this said vision—as a soul Is raised by a thought! And as a roll

Of bright devices is unrolled Still upward, with a gradual gold,— So rose the vision manifold,

Angel and organ, and the round Of spirits, solemnised and crowned,— While the freed clouds of incense wound

Ascending, following in their track, And glimmering faintly, like the rack O' the moon, in her own light cast back.

And as that solemn Dream withdrew, The lady's kiss did fall anew Cold on the poet's brow as dew.

And that same kiss which bound him first

Beyond the senses, now reversed Its own law, and most subtly pierced

His spirit with the sense of things Sensual and present. Vanishings Of glory, with Æolian wings

Struck him and passed: the lady's face

Did melt back in the chrysopras
Of the orient morning sky that was
Yet clear of lark,—and there and so
She melted, as a star might do,
Still smiling as she melted—slow,

Smiling so slow, he seemed to see Her smile the last thing, gloriously, Beyond her—far as memory.

Then he looked round: he was alone— He lay before the breaking sun, As Jacob at the Bethel stone.

And thought's entangled skein being wound,

He knew the moorland of his swound, And the pale pools that seared the ground,—

The far wood-pines, like offing ships— The fourth pool's yew anear him drips

World's cruelty attaints his lips;

And still he tastes it—bitter still— Through all that glorious possible He had the sight of present ill!

Yet rising calmly up and slowly With such a cheer as scorneth folly, A mild delightsome melancholy,

He journeyed homeward through the wood.

And prayed along the solitude, Betwixt the pines,—"O God, my God!"

The golden morning's open flowings Did sway the trees to murmurous bowings,

In metric chant of blessed poems.

And passing homeward through the wood,

He prayed along the solitude,—
"Thou, Poet-God, art great and
good!

"And though we must have, and have had

Right reason to be earthly sad,— Thou, Poet-God, art great and glad."

CONCLUSION

Life treads on life, and heart on heart—

We press too close on church and mart, To keep a dream or grave apart.

And I was 'ware of walking down That same green forest where had gone The poet-pilgrim. One by one

I traced his footsteps. From the east A red and tender radiance pressed Through the near trees, until I guessed

The sun behind shone full and round; While up the leafiness profound A wind scarce old enough for sound

Stood ready to blow on me when I turned that way; and now and then The birds sang and brake off again

To shake their pretty feathers dry Of the dew sliding droppingly From the leaf-edges, and apply

Back to their song. 'Twixt dew and bird'
So sweet a silence ministered,
God seemed to use it for a word.

Yet morning souls did leap and run In all things, as the least had won A joyous insight of the sun.

And no one looking round the wood Could help confessing, as he stood, "This Poet-God is glad and good."

But hark! a distant sound that grows!

A heaving, sinking of the boughs—A rustling murmur, not of those!

A breezy noise, which is not breeze! And white-clad children by degrees Steal out in troops among the trees.

Fair little children, morning-bright, With faces grave, yet soft to sight,— Expressive of restrained delight.

Some plucked the palm-boughs within reach,

And others leapt up high to catch The upper boughs, and shake from each

A rain of dew, till, wetted so, The child who held the branch let go, And it swang backward with a flow

Of faster drippings. Then I knew The children laughed—but the laugh flew

From its own chirrup, as might do

A frightened song-bird; and a child Who seemed the chief, said very mild, "Hush! keep this morning undefiled."

His eyes rebuked them from calm spheres;

His soul upon his brow appears In waiting for more holy years.

I called the child to me, and said, "What are your palms for?"—"To be spread,"

He answered, "on a poet dead.

"The poet died last month; and now The world which had been somewhat slow

In honouring his living brow,

"Commands the palms—They must be strown

On his new marble very soon, In a procession of the town,"

I sighed and said, "Did he foresee Any such honour?" "Verily I cannot tell you," answered he. "But this I know,—I fain would lay Mine own head down, another day, As he did,—with the fame away.

"A lily, a friend's hand had plucked, Lay by his death-bed, which he looked As deep down as a bee had sucked,

"Then, turning to the lattice, gazed O'er hill and river, and upraised His eyes illumined and amazed

"With the world's beauty, up to God, Re-offering on his iris broad The images of things bestowed

"By the chief Poet,—'God!' he cried,

'Be praised for anguish, which has tried; For Beauty, which has satisfied:—

"' For this world's presence, half within

And half without me—sound and.

This sense of Being and Having been.

"'I thank Thee that my soul hath room

For Thy grand world! Both guests may come—
Beauty, to soul—Body, to tomb!

"'I am content to be so weak,— Put strength into the words I speak, And I am strong in what I seek.

"'I am content to be so bare
Before the archers; everywhere
My wounds being stroked by heavenly
air.

"'I laid my soul before Thy feet, That Images of fair and sweet Should walk to other men on it.

"'I am content to feel the step Of each pure Image!—let those keep To mandragore, who care to sleep.

"'I am content to touch the brink
Of the other goblet, and I think
My bitter drink a wholesome drink.

"' Because my portion was assigned Wholesome and bitter—Thou art kind,

And I am blessed to my mind.

"' Gifted for giving, I receive The maythorn, and its scent outgive! I grieve not that I once did grieve, "'In my large joy of sight and touch Beyond what others count for such, I am content to suffer much.

""I know—is all the mourner saith,— Knowledge by suffering entereth; And Life is perfected by Death."

The child spake nobly. Strange to hear,

His infantine soft accents clear Charged with high meanings, did appear.—

And fair to see, his form and face,— Winged out with whiteness and pure

From the green darkness of the place.

Behind his head a palm-tree grew:
An orient beam, which pierced it
through,

Transversely on his forehead drew

The figure of a palm-branch brown, Traced on its brightness up and down In fine fair lines,—a shadow-crown.

Guido might paint his angels so— A little angel, taught to go With holy words to saints below.

Such innocence of action yet Significance of object met In his whole bearing strong and sweet.

And all the children, the whole band, Did round in rosy reverence stand, Each with a palm-bough in his hand.

"And so he died," I whispered;—
"Nay,

Not so," the childish voice did say—
"That poet turned him, first, to pray

"In silence, and God heard the rest, 'Twixt the sun's footsteps down the west.

Then he called one who loved him best,

"Yea, he called softly through the room

(His voice was weak yet tender)—
'Come,'

He said, 'come nearer! Let the bloom

"'Of Life grow over, undenied, This bridge of Death, which is not wide—

I shall be soon at the other side.

B.P.

"'Come, kiss me!' So the one in truth

Who loved him best—in love, not ruth, Bowed down and kissed him mouth to mouth.

"And, in that kiss of Love, was won Life's manumission. All was done—The mouth that kissed last, kissed alone.

"But in the former, confluent kiss, The same was sealed, I think, by His To words of truth and uprightness."

The child's voice trembled—his lips shook

Like a rose leaning o'er a brook, Which vibrates though it is not struck.

"And who," I asked, a little moved Yet curious-eyed, "was this that loved

And kissed him last, as it behoved?"

" I," softly said the child; and then, " I," said he louder, once again.

"His son,-my rank is, among men.

"And now that men exalt his name I come to gather palms with them, That holy Love may hallow Fame.

"He did not die alone, nor should His memory live so, 'mid these rude World-praisers—a worse solitude.

"Me, a voice calleth to that tomb Where these are strewing branch and bloom,

Saying, Come nearer !- and I come.

"Glory to God!" resumed he,—
And his eyes smiled for victory
O'er their own tears, which I could see

Fallen on the palm, down cheek and chin—

"That poet now hath entered in The place of rest which is not sin.

"And while he rests, his songs in troops Walk up and down our earthly slopes,

Walk up and down our earthly slopes. Companioned by diviner Hopes."

"But thou," I murmured—to engage The child's speech farther,—" hast an age

Too tender for this orphanage."

"Glory to God-to God!" he saith-"KNOWLEDGE BY SUFFERING EN-TERETH:

AND LIFE IS PERFECTED BY DEATH."

RHYME OF THE DUCHESS MAY

ringers from the sun,-Toll slowly.

And the oldest ringer said, "Ours is music for the Dead. When the rebecks are all done."

Six abeles i' the churchyard grow on the north side in a row,

Toll slowly. And the shadows of their tops, rock across the little slopes Of the grassy graves below.

On the south side and the west, a small river runs in haste.-Toll slowly.

And between the river flowing and the fair green trees a-growing. Do the dead lie at their rest.

On the east I sate that day, up against a willow grey :-Toll slowly.

Through the rain of willow-branches. I could see the low hill-ranges, And the river on its way.

There I sate beneath the tree, and the bell tolled solemnly,-Toll slowly.

While the trees' and rivers' voices flowed between the solemn noises .-

Yet death seemed more loud to me.

There, I read this ancient rhyme, while the bell did all the time Toll slowly.

And the solemn knell fell in with the tale of life and sin. Like a rhythmic fate sublime,

THE RHYME

Broad the forest stood (I read) on the Who betrothed her twelve years old, hills of Linteged,-Toll slowly.

And three hundred years had stood mute adown each hoary wood, Like a full heart having prayed.

And the little birds sang east, and the little birds sang west,-Toll slowly.

To the belfry, one by one, went the And but little thought was theirs of the silent antique years, In the building of their nest.

Down the sun dropt large and red. on the towers of Linteged .-Toll slowly.

Lance and spear upon the height, bristling strange in fiery light, While the castle stood in shade,

There, the castle stood up black. with the red sun at its back,-Toll slowly.

Like a sullen smouldering pyre, with a top that flickers fire When the wind is on its track.

And five hundred archers tall did besiege the castle wall,-Toll slowly.

And the castle seethed in blood, fourteen days and nights had stood. And to-night, anears its fall.

Yet thereunto, blind to doom, three months since, a bride did come, -Toll slowly.

One who proudly trod the floors, and softly whispered in the doors, " May good angels bless our home."

Oh, a bride of queenly eyes, with a front of constancies.-Toll slowly.

Oh, a bride of cordial mouth.—where the untired smile of youth Did light outward its own sighs.

'Twas a Duke's fair orphan-girl, and her uncle's ward, the Earl,— Toll slowly.

for the sake of dowry gold, To his son Lord Leigh, the churl. T 32

But what time she had made good all her years of womanhood,—

Toll slowly.

Unto both those Lords of Leigh, spake she out right sovranly,

"My will runneth as my blood.

 \mathbf{x}

"And while this same blood makes red this same right hand's veins," she said,—

Toll slowly.
"Tis my will, as lady free, not to

wed a Lord of Leigh, But Sir Guy of Linteged."

XT

The old Earl he smiled smooth, then he sighed for wilful youth,—

Toll slowly.

"Good my niece, that hand withal, looketh somewhat soft and small For so large a will, in sooth."

XII

She, too, smiled by that same sign—but her smile was cold and fine,—

Toll slowly.

"Little hand clasps muckle gold, or it were not worth the hold Of thy son, good uncle mine!"

XIII

Then the young Lord jerked his breath, and sware thickly in his teeth,—

Toll slowly.

"He would wed his own betrothed, an she loved him an she loathed, Let the life come or the death."

XIV

Up she rose with scornful eyes, as her father's child might rise,—

Toll slowly.

"Thy hound's blood, my Lord of Leigh, stains thy knightly heel," quoth she,

" And he moans not where he lies.

xv

"But a woman's will dies hard, in the hall or on the sward!"—

Toll slowly.

"By that grave, my lords, which made me orphaned girl and dowered ladv,"

I deny you wife and ward."

XVI

Unto each she bowed her head, and swept past with lofty tread.

Toll slowly.

Ere the midnight-bell had ceased, in the chapel had the priest Blessed her, bride of Linteged.

XVII

Fast and fain the bridal train along the night-storm rode amain:—

Toll slowly.

Hard the steeds of lord and serf struck their hoofs out on the turf, In the pauses of the rain.

XVIII

Fast and fain the kinsmen's train along the storm pursued amain—

Toll slowly.

Steed on steed-track, dashing off thickening, doubling, hoof on hoof,

In the pauses of the rain.

XIX

And the bridegroom led the flight on his red-roan steed of might,—

Toll slowly.

And the bride lay on his arm, still, as if she feared no harm, Smiling out into the night.

XX

"Dost thou fear?" he said at last;—
"Nay!" she answered him in haste,—

Toll slowly.

"Not such death as we could find only life with one behind— Ride on fast as fear—ride fast!"

XXI

Up the mountain wheeled the steed—girth to ground, and fetlocks spread,—

Toll slowly.

Headlong bounds, and rocking flanks, —down he staggered—down the banks,

To the towers of Linteged.

XXII

High and low the serfs looked out, red the flambeaus tossed about,—

Toll slowly.

In the courtyard rose the cry—
"Live the Duchess and Sir
Guy!"

But she never heard them shout.

TITES

On the steed she dropt her cheek, kissed his mane and kissed his neck.—

Toll slowly.

"I had happier died by thee, than lived on a Lady Leigh," Were the words which she did speak.

XXIV

But a three months' joyaunce lay 'twixt that moment and to-day,—

Toll slowly.

When five hundred archers tall stand beside the castle wall,
To recapture Duchess May.

XXV

And the castle standeth black, with the red sun at its back,—

Toll slowly.

And a fortnight's siege is done—and, except the Duchess, none Can misdoubt the coming wrack.

XXVI

Then the captain, young Lord Leigh, with his eyes so grey of blee,—

Toll slowly.

And thin lips that scarcely sheathe the cold white gnashing of his teeth

Gnashed in smiling, absently,—

XXVII

Cried aloud—"So goes the day, bridegroom fair of Duchess May!"— Toll slowly.

"Look thy last upon that sun. If thou seest to-morrow's one, 'Twill be through a foot of clay.

XXVIII

"Ha, fair bride! Dost hear no sound, save that moaning of the hound?"—

Toll slowly.

"Thou and I have parted troth,—
yet I keep my vengeance-oath,
And the other may come round.

XXIX

"Ha! thy will is brave to dare, and thy new love past compare,"—

Toll slowly.

"Yet thine old love's falchion brave is as strong a thing to have, As the will of lady fair. X

"Peck on blindly, netted dove!—If a wife's name thee behove,"—

Toll slowly.

"Thou shalt wear the same to-morrow, ere the grave has hid the sorrow

Of thy last ill-mated love.

XXXI

"O'er his fixed and silent mouth, thou and I will call back troth,"—

Toll slowly.
"He shall altar be and priest,—and

he will not cry at least

'I forbid you—I am loth!'

XXXII

"I will wring thy fingers pale, in the gauntlet of my mail,"—

Toll slowly.

"' Little hand and muckle gold' close shall lie within my hold,

As the sword did, to prevail."

XXXIII

Oh, the little birds sang east, and the little birds sang west,—

Toll slowly.

Oh, and laughed the Duchess May, and her soul did put away All his boasting, for a jest.

VIXXX

In her chamber did she sit, laughing low to think of it,—

Toll slowly.

"Tower is strong and will is free thou canst boast, my Lord of Leigh,—

But thou boastest little wit."

XXXV

In her tire-glass gazed she, and she blushed right womanly,—

Toll slowly.

She blushed half from her disdain—half, her beauty was so plain,
—" Oath for oath, my Lord of

Leigh!"

XXXVI

Straight she called her maidens in—
"Since ye gave me blame herein,"—

Toll slowly.

'That a bridal such as mine should lack gauds to make it fine,
Come and shrive me from that sin.

XXXVII

I gave mine hand away:"-Toll slowly.

"Bring the gold and bring the gem. we will keep bride-state in them. While we keep the foe at bav.

XXXVIII

"On your arms I loose mine hair ;comb it smooth and crown it fair."

Toll slowly. "I would look in purple pall from this lattice down the wall.

And throw scorn to one that's there!"

XXXXX

Oh, the little birds sang east, and the little birds sang west .-Toll slowly.

On the tower the castle's lord leant in silence on his sword. With an anguish in his breast.

With a spirit-laden weight, did he lean down passionate.-Toll slowly.

They have almost sapped the wall. they will enter therewithal. With no knocking at the gate.

Then the sword he leant upon, shivered—snapped upon the stone,-

Toll slowly. "Sword," he thought, with inward laugh, "ill thou servest for a

When thy nobler use is done!

XLII

"Sword, thy nobler use is done!tower is lost, and shame begun:"---

Toll slowly.

'If we met them in the breach, hilt to hilt or speech to speech, We should die there, each for one.

"If we met them at the wall, we should singly, vainly fall,"-Toll slowly.

"But if I die here alone,—then I "And their purple pall will spread die, who am but one, And die nobly for them all.

XLIV

"It is three months gone to-day, since "Five true friends lie for my sakein the moat and in the brake."-Toll slowly.

"Thirteen warriors lie at rest, with a black wound in the breast. And not one of these will wake.

"And no more of this shall be !-heartblood weighs too heavily."-Toll slowly.

"And I could not sleep in grave, with the faithful and the brave Heaped around and over me.

XLVI

"Since young Clare a mother hath." and young Ralph a plighted faith,"-

Toll slowly. "Since my pale young sister's cheeks blush like rose when Ronald speaks.

Albeit never a word she saith-

XLVII

"These shall never die for me-lifeblood falls too heavily:"-Toll slowly.

"And if I die here apart,-o'er my dead and silent heart They shall pass out safe and free.

XLVIII

"When the foe hath heard it said-'Death holds Guy of Linteged,'"-Toll slowly.

"That new corse new peace shall bring, and a blessed, blessed thing Shall the stone be at its head.

XLIX

"Then my friends shall pass out free. and shall bear my memory,"-Toll slowly.

"Then my foes shall sleek their pride, soothing fair my widowed bride Whose sole sin was love of me.

"With their words all smooth and sweet, they will front her and entreat,"-

Toll slowly.

underneath her fainting head. While her tears drop over it.

"She will weep her woman's tears, she will pray her woman's prayers,"—

Toll slowly.

"But her heart is young in pain, and her hopes will spring again By the suntime of her years.

"Ah, sweet May-ah, sweetest grief! -once I vowed thee my belief,"-Toll slowly.

"That thy name expressed thy sweetness,-May of poets, in completeness!

Now my May-day seemeth brief."

All these silent thoughts did swim o'er his eyes grown strange and dim.-

Toll slowly.

"Till his true men in the place wished they stood there face to face With the foe instead of him.

"One last oath, my friends that wear faithful hearts to do and dare!"

Toll slowly.

"Tower must fall, and bride be lost! -swear me service worth the cost."

-Bold they stood around to swear.

"Each man clasp my hand and swear, by the deed we failed in there,"—

Toll slowly.

"Not for vengeance, not for right, will ye strike one blow to-night!"-Pale they stood around—to swear.

"One last boon, young Ralph and Clare! faithful hearts to do and dare!"

Toll slowly.

"Bring that steed up from his stall, which she kissed before you all .-Guide him up the turret-stair.

"Ye shall harness him aright, and |" In the east tower, high'st of all,lead upward to this height! "-Toll slowly.

"Once in love and twice in war, hath he borne me strong and far, He shall bear me far to-night."

LVIII

Then his men looked to and fro. when they heard him speaking so,-

Toll slowly.

"'Las! the noble heart," they thought,—" he in sooth is griefdistraught.

Would we stood here with the foe!"

But a fire flashed from his eye, 'twixt their thought and their reply,-Toll slowly.

"Have ye so much time to waste? We who ride here, must ride fast, As we wish our foes to fly."

They have fetched the steed with care. in the harness he did wear,-Toll slowly.

Past the court and through the doors. across the rushes of the floors: But they goad him up the stair.

Then from out her bower chambère, did the Duchess May repair,-Toll slowly.

"Tell me now what is your need," said the lady, " of this steed, That ye goad him up the stair?"

Calm she stood! unbodkined through. fell her dark hair to her shoe .-Toll slowly.

And the smile upon her face, ere she left the tiring-glass,

Had not time enough to go.

LXIII

"Get thee back, sweet Duchess May! hope is gone like yesterday,"-Toll slowly.

"One half-hour completes the breach; and thy lord grows wild of speech .-

Get thee in, sweet lady, and pray.

LXIV

loud he cries for steed from stall."-Toll slowly.

as for love and victory, Though he rides the castle-wall.'

LXV

"And we fetch the steed from stall, upwhere never a hoof did fall."-Toll slowly.

"Wifely prayer meets deathly need! may the sweet Heavens hear thee plead.

If he rides the castle-wall."

Low she dropt her head, and lower, till her hair coiled on the floor,-Toll slowly.

And tear after tear you heard, fall distinct as any word

Which you might be listening

LXVII

"Get thee in, thou soft ladye!here, is never a place for thee!" Toll slowly.

"Braid thine hair and clasp thy gown, that thy beauty in its

May find grace with Leigh of Leigh."

LXVIII

She stood up in bitter case, with a pale yet steady face,-Toll slowly.

Like a statue thunderstruck, which though quivering seems to look Right against the thunder-place.

And her foot trod in, with pride, her own tears i' the stone beside,-Toll slowly.

"Go to, faithful friends, go to !-Judge no more what ladies do,-No, nor how their lords may ride!"

Then the good steed's rein she took, and his neck did kiss and stroke:-

Toll slowly.

Soft he neighed to answer her, and then followed up the stair. For the love of her sweet look.

Oh, and steeply, steeply wound up the narrow stair around,-Toll slowly.

"He would ride as far,' quoth he, Oh, and closely, closely speeding, step by step beside her treading,-Did he follow, meek as hound.

On the east tower, high'st of all,there, where never a hoof did fall,--

Toll slowly.

Out they swept, a vision steady,noble steed and lovely lady, Calm as if in bower or stall.

LXXIII

Down she knelt at her lord's knee, and she looked up silently,-Toll slowly.

And he kissed her twice and thrice, for that look within her eyes Which he could not bear to see.

LXXIV

Quoth he, "Get thee from this strife,—and the sweet saints bless thy life!" Toll slowly.

In this hour, I stand in need of my noble red-roan steed-But no more of my noble wife."

Ouoth she, "Meekly have I done all thy biddings under sun:"-Toll slowly.

"But by all my womanhood, which is proved so, true and good, I will never do this one.

LXXVI

"Now, by womanhood's degree, and by wifehood's verity,"-Toll slowly.

"In this hour if thou hast need of thy noble red-roan steed, Thou hast also need of me.

LXXVII

"By this golden ring ye see on this lifted hand, pardie,"-Toll slowly.

"If, this hour, on castle wall, can be room for steed from stall, Shall be also room for me.

LXXVIII

"So the sweet saints with me be," (did she utter solemnly),— Toll slowly.

'If a man, this eventide, on this castle wall will ride, He shall ride the same with me."

LXXIX

Oh, he sprang up in the selle, and he Thrice he wrung her hands in twain, laughed out bitter-well,-Toll slowly.

"Wouldst thou ride among the leaves, as we used on other eves, To hear chime a vesper-bell?"

LXXX

She clang closer to his knee-" Ay, beneath the cypress-tree!"-Toll slowly.

" Mock me not, for otherwhere, than along the greenwood fair, Have I ridden fast with thee!

" Fast I rode, with new-made vows, from my angry kinsman's house!" Toll slowly.

"What! and would you men should reck, that I dared more for love's sake

As a bride than as a spouse?

LXXXII

"What, and would you it should fall, as a proverb, before all,"-Toll slowly.

"That a bride may keep your side while through castle-gate you

Yet eschew the castle wall?"

LXXXIII

Ho! the breach yawns into ruin, and roars up against her suing,-Toll slowly.

With the inarticulate din, and the dreadful falling in-

Shrieks of doing and undoing!

Twice he wrung her hands in twain, but the small hands closed again,-

Toll slowly.

Back he reined the steed-back, back! but she trailed along his track,

With a frantic clasp and strain.

LXXXV

Evermore the foemen pour through They have caught out at the rein, the crash of window and door,-Toll slowly.

And the shouts of "Leigh" and

Strike up clear amid the roar.

LXXXVI

-but they closed and clung again,-

Toll slowly.

Wild she clung, as one, withstood, clasps a Christ upon the rood. In a spasm of deathly pain.

LXXXVII

She clung wild and she clung mute,with her shuddering lips halfshut,-

Toll slowly.

Her head fallen as in swound,—hair and knee swept on the ground,-She clung wild to stirrup and foot.

LXXXVIII

Back he reined his steed, back-thrown on the slippery coping-stone,-Toll slowly.

Back the iron hoofs did grind on the battlement behind Whence a hundred feet went down.

LXXXIX

And his heel did press and goad on the quivering flank bestrode, Toll slowly.

"Friends, and brothers! save my wife !- Pardon, sweet, in change for life,-

But I ride alone to God."

Straight as if the Holy Name had upbreathed her like a flame,-Toll slowly.

She upsprang, she rose upright,—in his selle she sate in sight; By her love she overcame.

And her head was on his breast, where she smiled as one at rest,-Toll slowly.

"Ring," she cried, "O vesper-bell, in the beechwood's old chapelle! But the passing-bell rings best."

which Sir Guy threw loose-in vain,-

Toll slowly.

"Leigh," and the shricks of For the horse in stark despair, with "kill!" and "flee!" his front hoofs poised in air, On the last verge rears amain.

and he hangs, he rocks betweenand his nostrils curdle in. Toll slowly.

the flakes of foam fall off:

And his face grows fierce and thin!

XCIV

And a look of human woe, from his staring eyes did go.-Toll slowly.

And a sharp cry uttered he, in a foretold agonv Of the headlong death below .-

And, "Ring, ring, thou passingbell." still she cried, "i' the old chapelle! "-

Toll slowly.

Then back-toppling, crashing backa dead weight flung out to wrack, Horse and riders overfell.

Oh, the little birds sang east, and the little birds sang west .-Toll slowly.

And I read this ancient Rhyme, in the churchyard, while the chime Slowly tolled for one at rest.

The abeles moved in the sun, and the river smooth did run.-Toll slowly.

And the ancient Rhyme rang strange, with its passion and its change, Here, where all done lay undone.

And beneath a willow-tree, I a little grave did see,-

Toll slowly.

Where was graved,-" HERE UNDE-FILED, LIETH MAUD, A THREE-YEAR CHILD, HUNDRED FORTY-

EIGHTEEN THREE.

Then, O Spirits—did I say—ye who rode so fast that day,-Toll slowly.

Did star-wheels and angel-wings, with their holy winnowings, Keep beside you all the way?

Though in passion ve would dash, with a blind and heavy crash -Toll slowly.

And he shivers head and hoof-and Up against the thick-bossed shield of God's judgment in the field. Though your heart and brain were

rash -

Now, your will is all unwilled-now. your pulses are all stilled -Toll slowly.

Now, ye lie as meek and mild (whereso laid) as Maud the child. Whose small grave was lately filled.

Beating heart and burning brow, ve are very patient now,-Toll slowly.

And the children might be bold to pluck the kingcups from your

Ere a month had let them grow.

And you let the goldfinch sing in the alder near in spring,-Toll slowly.

Let her build her nest and sit all the three weeks out on it. Murmuring not at anything.

In your patience ye are strong; cold and heat ve take not wrong :-Toll slowly.

When the trumpet of the angel blows eternity's evangel, Time will seem to you not long.

Oh, the little birds sang east, and the little birds sang west,-Toll slowly.

And I said in underbreath,-All our life is mixed with death. And who knoweth which is best?

Oh, the little birds sang east, and the little birds sang west,-Toll slowly.

And I smiled to think God's greatness flowed around our incompleteness.-

Round our restlessness, His rest.

THE LADY'S YES

"YES," I answered you last night, "No," this morning, Sir, I say. Colours seen by candle-light, Will not look the same by day.

When the viols played their best, Lamps above, and laughs below-Love me sounded like a jest, Fit for Yes or fit for No.

Call me false or call me free-Vow, whatever light may shine, No man on your face shall see Any grief for change on mine.

Yet the sin is on us both-Time to dance is not to woo-Wooer light makes fickle troth. Scorn of me recoils on you.

Learn to win a lady's faith Nobly, as the thing is high: Bravely, as for life and death-With a loyal gravity.

Lead her from the festive boards, Point her to the starry skies, Guard her, by your truthful words. Pure from courtship's flatteries.

By your truth she shall be true— Ever true, as wives of vore-And her Yes, once said to you, SHALL be Yes for evermore.

THE POET AND THE BIRD

A FABLE

Said a people to a poet—"Go out from among us straightway! While we are thinking earthly things, thou singest of divine: There's a little fair brown nightingale, who, sitting in the gateway, Makes fitter music to our ear than any song of thine!"

The poet went out weeping-the nightingale ceased chanting : " Now, wherefore, O thou nightingale, is all thy sweetness done?" -" I cannot sing my earthly things, the heavenly poet wanting,

Whose highest harmony includes the lowest under sun.

The poet went out weeping, -and died abroad, bereft there-The bird flew to his grave and died

amid a thousand wails :-

And, when I last came by the place, I swear the music left there Was only of the poet's song, and

not the nightingale's.

THE LOST BOWER

In the pleasant orchard closes, "God bless all our gains," say

But "May God bless all our losses,'

Better suits with our degree. -Listen, gentle—ay, and simple! Listen, children on the knee!

Green the land is where my daily Steps in jocund childhood played-

Dimpled close with hill and

Dappled very close with shade; Summer-snow of apple blossoms, running up from glade to glade,

There is one hill I see nearer In my vision of the rest; And a little wood seems clearer, As it climbeth from the west, Sideway from the tree-locked valley,

to the airy upland crest.

Small the wood is, green with

And, completing the ascent, Where the wind blows and sun dazzles.

Thrills in leafy tremblement, Like a heart that, after climbing, beateth quickly through content.

Not a step the wood advances O'er the open hill-top's bound: There, in green arrest, the branches

See their image on the ground: You may walk beneath them smiling, glad with sight and glad with sound.

How the birds do leap and call In the greenwood, out of sight

Out of reach and fear of all . And the squirrels crack the filberts

through their cheerful madrigal.

On your left, the sheep are cropping

The slant grass and daisies pale : And five apple-trees stand drop-

Separate shadows toward the vale.

Over which, in choral silence, the hills look you their hail!"

Far out, kindled by each other. Shining hills on hills arise, Close as brother leans to brother When they press beneath the

Of some father praying blessings from the gifts of paradise.

While beyond, above

And above their woods also, Malvern hills, for mountains counted

Not unduly, loom a-row-Keepers of Piers Plowman's visions. through the sunshine and the snow.1

Yet, in childhood, little prized I That fair walk and far survey: Twas a straight walk unadvised

The least mischief worth a nav— Up and down—as dull as grammar on the eve of holiday.

But the wood, all close and clenching

Bough in bough and root in root,— No more sky (for over-branching)

The Malvern Hills of Worcestershire are the scene of Langland's visions, and thus resent the earliest classic ground of English

At your head than at your foot,-For you hearken on your right Oh, the wood drew me within it, by a glamour past dispute.

Few and broken paths showed through it.

Where the sheep had tried to

Forced, with snowy wool, to strew

Round the thickets, when anon They, with silly thorn-pricked noses, bleated back into the sun.

But my childish heart beat stronger

Than those thickets dare to grow: I could pierce them! I could longer

Travel on, methought, than so. Sheep for sheep-paths! braver children climb and creep where they would go.

XIV

And the poets wander, said I. Over places all as rude! Bold Rinaldo's lovely lady Sate to meet him in a wood-Rosalinda, like a fountain, laughed

out pure with solitude.

And if Chaucer had not travelled Through a forest by a well, He had never dreamt nor marvelled

At those ladies fair and fell Who lived smiling without loving, in their island-citadel.

Thus I thought of the old singers. And took courage from their song,

Till my little struggling fingers Tore asunder gyve and thong

Of the brambles which entrapped me and the barrier branches strong.

XVII

On a day, such pastime keeping, With a fawn's heart debonair. Under-crawling, overleaping Thorns that prick and boughs that bear.

stood suddenly astonied-I was gladdened unaware.

XVIII

floated

Back the covert dim and close, And the open ground was coated Carpet-smooth with grass and moss,

And the blue-bell's purple presence signed it worthily acros 3.

Here a linden-tree stood, bright-

All adown its silver rind. For as some trees draw the lightning,

So this tree, unto my mind, Drew to earth the blessed sunshine Took me in a chair of silence very from the sky where it was shrined.

Tall the linden-tree, and near it An old hawthorn also grew; And wood-ivy like a spirit Hovered dimly round the two,

Shaping thence that Bower of beauty which I sing of thus to you.

'Twas a bower for garden fitter Than for any woodland wide. Though a fresh and dewy glitter Struck it through from side to side.

Shaped and shaven was the freshness, as by garden-cunning plied.

Oh, a lady might have come there, Hooded fairly like her hawk, With a book or lute in summer. And a hope of sweeter talk,— Listening less to her own music than for footsteps on the walk.

IIIXX

But that bower appeared a marvel

In the wildness of the place! With such seeming art and travail.

Finely fixed and fitted was Leaf to leaf, the dark-green ivy, to the summit from the base.

And the fvy, veined and glossy, Was enwrought with eglantine; And the wild hop fibred closely,

And the large-leaved columbine, From the place I stood in, Arch of door and window mullion, did right sylvanly entwine.

Rose-trees either side the door

Growing lithe and growing tall, Each one set a summer warder For the keeping of the hall,-With a red rose and a white rose, leaning, nodding at the wall.

As I entered—mosses hushing Stole all noises from my foot; And a green elastic cushion,

Clasped within the linden's root, rare and absolute.

All the floor was paved with glory,-

Greenly, silently inlaid, Through quick motions made before me

With fair counterparts in shade Of the fair serrated ivy-leaves which slanted overhead.

XXVIII

"Is such pavement in a palace?" So I questioned in my thought: The sun, shining through the chalice

Of the red rose hung without, Threw within a red libation, like an answer to my doubt.

At the same time, on the linen Of my childish lap there fell Two white may-leaves, downward winning

Through the ceiling's miracle, From a blossom, like an angel, out of sight yet blessing well.

Down to floor and up to ceiling Quick I turned my childish face, With an innocent appealing For the secret of the place,

To the trees, which surely knew it in partaking of the grace.

Where's no foot of human crea-

How could reach a human hand?

And if this be work of nature. Why is nature sudden bland. Breaking off from other wild work? It was hard to understand.

XXXII

Was she weary of rough-doing, Of the bramble and the thorn? Did she pause in tender rueing, Here, of all her sylvan scorn? Or, in mock of art's deceiving, was Yet she never sings such music, -or the sudden mildness worn?

Or could this same bower (I fancied) Be the work of Dryad strong, Who, surviving all that chanced In the world's old pagan wrong,

Lay hid, feeding in the woodland, on the last true poet's song?

XXXIV

Or was this the house of fairies, Left, because of the rough ways, Unassoiled by Ave Marys the passing pilgrim Which prays,

And beyond St. Catherine's chiming on the blessed Sabbath days?

XXXV

So, young muser, I sate listening To my fancy's wildest word-On a sudden, through the glistening

Leaves around, a little stirred, Came a sound, a sense of music, which was rather felt than heard.

XXXVI

Softly, finely, it inwound me— From the world it shut me in,-Like a fountain, falling round me, Which with silver waters thin Clips a little marble Naiad sitting smilingly within.

XXXVII

Whence the music came, who knoweth? I know nothing. But indeed Pan or Faunus never bloweth So much sweetness from a reed Which has sucked the milk of waters,

at the oldest riverhead.

XXXVIII

Never lark the sun can waken With such sweetness! when the lark.

The high planets overtaking In the half-evanished Dark. Casts his singing to their singing, like an arrow to the mark.

XXXXX

Never nightingale so singeth— Oh! she leans on thorny tree, And her poet-soul she flingeth Over pain to victory!

she sings it not to me.

Never blackbirds, never thrushes, Nor small finches sing as sweet, When the sun strikes through the bushes.

To their crimson clinging feet, And their pretty eyes look sideways to the summer heavens complete.

If it were a bird, it seemed Most like Chaucer's, which, in

He of green and azure dreamed, While it sate in spirit-ruth On that bier of a crowned lady, singing nigh her silent mouth.

XLII

If it were a bird!—ah, sceptic, Give me "Yea" or give me " Nay "-

Though my soul were nympholeptic,

As I heard that virelay, You may stoop your pride to pardon, for my sin is far away.

I rose up in exaltation And an inward trembling heat, And (it seemed) in geste of pas-

Dropped the music to my feet, Like a garment rustling downwards! -such a silence followed it.

XLIV

Heart and head beat through the quiet

Full and heavily, though slower. In the song, I think, and by it, Mystic Presences of power Had up-snatched me to the Timeless.

then returned me to the Hour.

XLV

In a child-abstraction lifted.

Foot and soul being dimly drifted Through the greenwood, till, at

In the hill-top's open sunshine I all consciously was cast.

XLVI

Face to face with the true moun-

I stood silently and still,

Drawing strength from fancy's dauntings.

From the air about the hill. And from Nature's open mercies, and most debonair goodwill.

XLVII

Oh! the golden-hearted daisies Witnessed there, before youth.

To the truth of things, with

praises

Of the beauty of the truth: And I woke to Nature's real, laughing joyfully for both.

XLVIII

And I said within me laughing, I have found a bower to-day, A green lusus-fashioned half in Chance, and half in Nature's plav—

And a little bird sings nigh it, I will nevermore missay.

Henceforth, I will be the fairy Of this bower, not built by one; I will go there, sad or merry. With each morning's benison,

And the bird shall be my harper in the dream-hall I have won.

> So I said. But the next morning, (-Child, look up into my face-'Ware, oh sceptic, of your scorn-

This is truth in its pure grace:) The next morning, all had vanished, or my wandering missed the place.

Bring an oath most sylvan holy, And upon it swear me true—

By the wind-bells swinging slowly Their mute curfews in the dew-Straightway from the bower I By the advent of the snowdrop-by the rosemary and rue, -

I affirm by all or any. Let the cause be charm or chance. That my wandering searches many

Missed the bower of my ro-

mance-

That I nevermore, upon it, turned my mortal countenance.

I affirm that, since I lost it. Never bower has seemed so fair-Never garden-creeper crossed it. With so deft and brave an air-Never bird sung in the summer, as I

saw and heard them there.

Day by day, with new desire, Toward my wood I ran in faith-Under leaf and over brier-Through the thickets, out of breath-

Like the prince who rescued Beauty from the sleep as long as death.

But his sword of mettle clashed. And his arm smote strong, I ween:

And her dreaming spirit flashèd Through her body's fair white screen,-

And the light thereof might guide him up the cedar alleys green.

But for me, I saw no splendour— All my sword was my childheart:

And the wood refused surrender Of that bower it held apart, Safe as Œdipus's grave-place, 'mid

Colone's olives swart.

As Aladdin sought the basements His fair palace rose upon, And the four-and-twenty casements

Which gave answers to the sun: So, in wilderment of gazing, I looked up, and I looked down.

Vears have vanished since, as wholly

As the little bower did then : And you call it tender folly

That such thoughts should come again?

Ah! I cannot change this sighing for your smiling, brother-men!

For this loss it did prefigure Other loss of better good. When my soul, in spirit-vigour, And in ripened womanhood. Fell from visions of more beauty than

an arbour in a wood.

I have lost-oh, many a plea-

Manya hope, and many a power--Studious health and merry leisure-

The first dew on the first flower! But the first of all my losses was the losing of the bower.

I have lost the dream of Doing. And the other dream of Done-The first spring in the pursuing, The first pride in the Begun,-First recoil from incompletion, in the face of what is won,-

LXII

Exaltations in the far light Where some cottage only is-Mild dejections in the starlight, Which the sadder-hearted miss: And the child-cheek blushing scarlet for the very shame of bliss.

LXIII

I have lost the sound child-sleep-

Which the thunder could not break:

Something too of the strong leaping

Of the staglike heart awake, Which the pale is low for keeping in the road it ought to take.

LXIV

Some respect to social fictions Has been also lost by me; And some generous genuflexions, Which my spirit offered free

To the pleasant old conventions of our false humanity.

LXV

All my losses did I tell you, Ye, perchance, would look away ;-

Ye would answer me. "Farewell!

Make sad company to-day, And your tears are falling faster than the bitter words you say."

For God placed me like a dial In the open ground with power, And my heart had for its trial, All the sun and all the shower! And I suffered many losses; and my first was of the bower.

LXVII

Laugh vou? If that loss of mine be

Of no heavy-seeming weight— When the cone falls from the pine-tree,

The young children laugh thereat: Yet the wind that struck it, riseth, and the tempest shall be great.

LXVIII

One who knew me in my childhood

In the glamour and the game, Looking on me long and mild, would

Never know me for the same. Come, unchanging recollections, where those changes overcame.

LXIX

On this couch I weakly lie on, While I count my memories,-Through the fingers which, still sighing,

I press closely on mine eyes,-Clear as once beneath the sunshine, I

behold the bower arise.

Springs the linden-tree as greenly. Stroked with light adown its rind-

And the ivy-leaves serenely Each in either intertwined;

And the rose-trees at the doorway, they have neither grown nor pined.

LXXI

From those overblown faint roses,
Not a leaf appeareth shed.

And that little bud discloses
Not a thorn's-breadth more of

red,

For the winters and the summers which have passed me overhead.

LXXII

And that music overfloweth, Sudden sweet, the sylvan eaves; Thrush or nightingale—who knoweth?

Fay or Faunus—who believes? But my heart still trembles in me, to the trembling of the leaves.

LXXIII

Is the bower lost, then? Who sayeth

That the bower indeed is lost? Hark! my spirit in it prayeth Through the sunshine and the frost.—

And the prayer preserves it greenly, to the last and uttermost—

LXXIV

Till another open for me
In God's Eden-land unknown,
With an angel at the doorway,
White with gazing at His
Throne,

And a saint's voice in the palm-trees, singing—"ALL IS LOST ... and won!"

A CHILD ASLEEP

1

How he sleepeth! having drunken

Weary childhood's mandragore!

From its pretty eyes have sunken

Pleasures, to make room for

Sleeping near the wither'd nosegay, which he pulled the day before.

TT

Nosegays! leave them for the waking:

Throw them earthward where they grew.

Dim are such, beside the breaking Amaranths he looks unto—

Folded eyes see brighter colours than the open ever do.

III

Heaven-flowers, rayed by shadows golden

From the paths they sprang beneath,

Now perhaps divinely holden, Swing against him in a wreath— We may think so from the quickening

of his bloom and of his breath.

IV

Vision unto vision calleth,
While the young child dreameth on.

Fair, O dreamer, thee befalleth With the glory thou hast won! Darker wert thou in the garden yestermorn by summer sun.

v

We should see the spirits ringing Round thee,—were the clouds away.

'Tis the child heart draws them, singing

In the silent-seeming clay— Singing!—Stars that seem the mutest, go in music all the way.

VI

As the moths around a taper,
As the bees around a rose,
As the gnats around a vapour,—
So the spirits group and close
Round about a holy childhood, as if
drinking its repose.

VII

Shapes of brightness overlean thee,—

Flash their diadems of youth On the ringlets which half screen thee—

While thou smilest, . . . not in sooth

Thy smile... but the overfair one, dropt from some ethereal mouth.

Haply it is angels' duty,

During slumber, shade by shade

To fine down this childish beauty To the thing it must be made, Ere the world shall bring it praises, or the tomb shall see it fade.

Softly, softly! make no noises! Now he lieth dead and dumb— Now he hears the angels' voices Folding silence in the room— Now he muses deep the meaning of

the Heaven-words as they come.

Speak not! he is consecrated-Breathe no breath across his eves.

Lifted up and separated, On the hand of God he lies. In a sweetness beyond touching,held in cloistral sanctities.

Could ye bless him-fathermother?

Bless the dimple in his cheek? Dare ye look at one another,

And the benediction speak? Would ve not break out in weeping, and confess yourselves too weak?

He is harmless—ve are sinful.— Ye are troubled—he, at ease: From his slumber, virtue winful Floweth outward with increase!

Dare not bless him! but be blessed by his peace—and go in peace.

CROWNED AND WEDDED

When last before her people's face her own fair face she bent.

Within the meek projection of that shade she was content

To erase the child-smile from her lips. which seemed as if it might

Be still kept holy from the world to childhood still in sight-

princely vow-to rule-

A priestly vow—to rule by grace of God the pitiful,-

A very godlike vow-to rule in right and righteousness,

And with the law and for the land! so God the vower bless!

The minster was alight that day, but not with fire, I ween,

And long-drawn glitterings swept adown that mighty aisled scene.

The priests stood stoled in their pomp, the sworded chiefs in theirs,

And so, the collared knights,—and so, the civil Ministers.-

And so, the waiting lords and dames -and little pages best

At holding trains—and legates so. from countries East and West-

So, alien princes, native peers, and high-born ladies bright,

Along whose brows the Queen's, new crowned, flashed coronets to light.-

And so, the people at the gates, with priestly hands on high,

Which bring the first anointing to all legal majesty:

And so the DEAD—who lie in rows beneath the minster floor.

There, verily an awful state maintaining evermore-

The statesman whose clean palm will kiss no bribe whate'er it be:

The courtier who, for no fair queen, will rise up to his knee;

The court-dame who, for no courttire, will leave her shroud behind:

The laureate who no courtlier rhyme than "dust to dust" can find:

The kings and queens who having made that vow and worn that crown.

Descended unto lower thrones and darker, deep adown!

Dieu et mon droit—what is't to them? -what meaning can it have?-

The King of kings, the rights of death —God's judgment and the grave! And when betwixt the quick and dead

the young fair Queen had vowed. The living shouted "May she live! Victoria, live!" aloud-

To erase it with a solemn vow,—a And as the loyal shouts went up, true spirits prayed between,

"The blessings happy monarchshave, be thine, O crowned Queen!"

But now before her people's face she bendeth hers anew,

And calls them, while she vows, to be her witness thereunto.

She vowed to rule, and, in that oath, her childhood put away-

She doth maintain her womanhood, in vowing love to-day.

O lovely lady !-let her vow !-such lips become such vows,

And fairer goeth bridal wreath than crown with vernal brows.

O lovely lady!—let her vow!—yea, let her vow to love !-

And though she be no less a queenwith purples hung above,

The pageant of a Court behind, the Napoleon !- years ago, and that royal kin around,

And woven gold to catch her looks turned maidenly to ground,

Yet may the bride-veil hide from her a little of that state,

While loving hopes, for retinues, about her sweetness wait.

SHE vows to love who vowed to rule -the chosen at her side;

Let none say, "God preserve the Queen"!-but rather, "Bless the bride"!

None blow the trump, none bend the knee, none violate the dream

Wherein no monarch but a wife, she to herself may seem.

Or if ye say, "Preserve the Queen!" —oh, breathe it inward low— She is a woman, and beloved !- and

'tis enough but so. Count it enough, thou noble Prince,

who tak'st her by the hand,

And claimest for thy lady-love, our lady of the land!

And since, Prince Albert, men have called thy spirit high and rare, And true to truth and brave for truth, as some at Augsburg

were,-We charge thee by thy lofty thoughts. and by thy poet-mind

Which not by glory and degree takes measure of mankind,

Esteem that wedded hand less dear for sceptre than for ring,

And hold her uncrowned womanhood to be the royal thing.

And now, upon our Queen's last vow, what blessings shall we pray? None, straitened to a shallow crown. will suit our lips to-day.

Behold, they must be free as love they must be broad as free.

Even to the borders of heaven's light and earth's humanity.

Long live she!—send up loyal shouts —and true hearts pray between,—

"The blessings happy PEASANTS have, be thine, O crowned Queen!"

CROWNED AND BURIED

great word Compact of human breath in hate and

dread And exultation, skied us overhead-

An atmosphere whose lightning was the sword Scathing the cedars of the world.—

drawn down

In burnings, by the metal of a crown.

Napoleon! Nations, while they cursed that name.

Shook at their own curse; and while others bore

Its sound, as of a trumpet, on before, Brass-fronted legions justified its fame-

And dying men, on trampled battle-

Near their last silence, uttered it for

Napoleon! Sages, with high foreheads drooped, Did use it for a problem: children

small

Leapt up to greet it, as at manhood's

call: Priests blessed it from their altars overstooped

By meek-eyed Christs,—and widows with a moan

Spake it, when questioned why they sate alone.

w

That name consumed the silence of the snows

In Alpine keeping, holy and cloudhid,

The mimic eagles dared what Nature's did.

And over-rushed her mountainous repose

In search of eyries: and the Egyptian river

Mingled the same word with its grand "For ever."

v

That name was shouted near the pyramidal

Nilotic tombs, whose mummied habitants,

Packed to humanity's significance, Motioned it back with stillness.

Shouts as idle
As hireling artists' work of myrrh and

spice
Which swathed last glories round the
Ptolemies.

7.7

The world's face changed to hear it.

Kingly men

Came down, in chidden babes' bewilderment,

From autocratic places—each content

With sprinkled ashes for anointing;
—then

The people laughed or wondered for the nonce

To see one throne a composite of thrones.

VII

Napoleon! even the torrid vastitude Of India felt in throbbings of the air That name which scattered by disas-

trous blare
All Europe's bound-lines,—drawn
afresh in blood.

Napoleon—from the Russias, west to Spain!

And Austria trembled—till ye heard her chain.

VIII

And Germany was 'ware—and Italy Oblivious of old fames—her laurel-locked.

High-ghosted Cæsars passing uninvoked,—

Did crumble her own ruins with her knee,

To serve a newer.—Ay! but Frenchmen cast

A future from them nobler than her past.

IX

For, verily, though France augustly rose

With that raised NAME, and did assume by such

The purple of the world,—none gave so much

As she, in purchase—to speak plain, in loss—

Whose hands, to freedom stretched, dropped paralysed

To wield a sword or fit an undersized

x

King's crown to a great man's head.

And though along

Her Paris' streets did float on frequent streams

Of triumph, pictured or emmarbled dreams,

Dreamt right by genius in a world

gone wrong,—
No dream, of all so won, was fair to

As the lost vision of her liberty.

XI

Napoleon! 'twas a high name lifted high!

It met at last God's thunder sent to clear

Our compassing and covering atmosphere

And open a clear sight beyond the sky,

Of supreme empire; this of earth's was done—

And kings crept out again to feel the sun.

XII

The kings crept out—the peoples sate at home.—

And finding the long-invocated peace A pall embroidered with worn images Of rights divine, too scant to cover doom

Such as they suffered,—cursed the corn that grew

Rankly, to bitter bread, on Waterloo.

A deep gloom centred in the deep repose-

The nations stood up mute to count their dead—

And he who owned the NAME which vibrated

Through silence,—trusting to his noblest foes

When earth was all too grey for chivalry,

Died of their mercies, 'mid the desert

XIV

O wild St. Helen! very still she kept

With a green willow for all pyramid,-Which stirred a little if the low wind did.

A little more, if pilgrims overwept

Disparting the lithe boughs to see the

Which seemed to cover his for judgment-day.

Nay! not so long!-France kept her old affection

As deeply as the sepulchre the corse, Until dilated by such love's remorse To a new angel of the resurrection, She cried, "Behold, thou England! I would have

The dead whereof thou wottest, from that grave."

And England answered in the cour-

Which, ancient foes turned lovers. may befit,-

"Take back thy dead! and when thou buriest it.

Throw in all former strifes 'twixt thee and me." Amen, mine England! 'tis a courteous

claim-

But ask a little room too . . . for thy shame!

XVII

Because it was not well, it was not

Nor tuneful with thy lofty-chanted

Among the Oceanides,—that Heart

To bind and bare and vex with vulture fell.

I would, my noble England! men might seek

All crimson stains upon thy breastnot cheek!

XVIII

I would that hostile fleets had scarred this bay,1 Instead of the lone ship which waited

moored Until thy princely purpose was as-

sured. Then left a shadow—not to pass

awav--Not for to-night's moon, nor tomorrow's sun!

Green watching hills, ye witnessed what was done!

But since it was done,—in sepulchral

We fain would pay back something of our debt To France, if not to honour, and for-

How through much fear we falsified

the trust Of a fallen foe and exile.—We return Orestes to Electra . . . in his urn.

A little urn—a little dust inside, Which once outbalanced the large

earth albeit To-day a four-years child might carry

Sleek-browed and smiling, "Let the burden 'bide!"

Orestes to Electra !-O fair town

Of Paris, how the wild tears will run down

And run back in the chariot-marks of

Time, When all the people shall come forth

to meet The passive victor, death-still in the

street He rode through 'mid the shouting and bell-chime

And martial music,—under eagles which

Dyed their rapacious beaks at Austerlitz. 1 Written at Torquay.

Napoleon! he hath come againborne home

Which gathers its own wrecks perpetually,

Majestically moaning. Give him room!—

Room for the dead in Paris! welcome solemn

And grave-deep, 'neath the cannonmoulded column! 1

XXIII

There, weapon spent and warrior spent may rest

From roar of fields; provided Jupiter Dare trust Saturnus to lie down so

His bolts !- And this he may. For. dispossessed

Ofany godship lies the godlike arm-The goat, Jove sucked, as likely to do harm.

XXIV

and vet . . . Napoleon !-the recovered name

Shakes the old casements of the world! and we

Look out upon the passing pageantry. Attesting that the Dead makes good his claim

Toa French grave, -another kingdom won-The last—of few spans—by Napoleon.

Blood fell like dew beneath his sunrise—sooth!

But glittered dew-like in the covenanted Mendian light. He was a despot-

granted! But the adros of his autocratic mouth

Said yea i' the people's French: he magnified

The image of the freedom he denied.

XXVI

and if they asked for rights, he made reply,

"Ye have my glory!"—and so, drawing round them

Hisample purple, glorified and bound

It was the first intention to bury him under he column.

In an embrace that seemed identity. He ruled them like a tyrant—true! but none

Thom the popular ebbing heart,—a Were ruled like slaves: each felt Napoleon.

XXVII

I do not praise this man: the man was flawed,

For Adam-much more, Christ!his knee, unbent-

His hand, unclean—his aspiration, pent

Within a sword-sweep—pshaw!—but since he had

The genius to be loved, why let him

The justice to be honoured in his grave.

I think this nation's tears thus poured together,

Nobler than shouts; I think this funeral

Grander than crownings, though a Pope bless all;

I think this grave stronger than thrones. But whether

The crowned Napoleon or the buried Be better, I discern not—Angels may.

TO FLUSH, MY DOG

LOVING friend, the gift of one Who her own true faith hath run, Through thy lower nature.2 Be my benediction said With my hand upon thy head, Gentle fellow-creature!

Like a lady's ringlets brown. Flow thy silken ears adown Either side demurely Of thy silver-suited breast, Shining out from all the rest Of thy body purely.

2 This dog was the gift of my dear and admired friend, Miss Mitford, and belongs to the beautiful race she has rendered celebrated among English and American readers. The Flushes have their laurels as well as the Cæsars,—the chief difference (at least the very head and front of it) consisting, perhaps, in the bald head of the latter under the crown.

III

Darkly brown thy body is,
Till the sunshine striking this
Alchemise its dulness,
When the sleek curls manifold
Flash all over into gold,
With a burnished fulness,

IV

Underneath my stroking hand, Startled eyes of hazel bland Kindling, growing larger, Up thou leapest with a spring, Full of prank and curveting, Leaping like a charger.

v

Leap! thy broad tail waves a light;
Leap! thy slender feet are bright,
Canopied in fringes.
Leap—those tasselled ears of thine
Flickér strangely, fair and fine,
Down their golden inches.

VI

Yet, my pretty, sportive friend, Little is't to such an end That I praise thy rareness! Other dogs may be thy peers Haply in these drooping ears, And this glossy fairness.

VII

But of thee it shall be said,
This dog watched beside a bed
Day and night unweary,—
Watched within a curtained room,
Where no sunbeam brake the gloom
Round the sick and dreary.

VIII

Roses, gathered for a vase,
In that chamber died apace,
Beam and breeze resigning—
This dog only, waited on,
Knowing that when light is gone,
Love remains for shining.

IX

Other dogs in thymy dew
Tracked the hares and followed
through
Sunny moor or meadow

Sunny moor or meadow— This dog only, crept and crept Next a languid cheek that slept, Sharing in the shadow.

Other dogs of loyal cheer Bounded at the whistle clear, Up the woodside hieingThis dog only, watched in reach Of a faintly uttered speech, Or a louder sighing.

XI

And if one or two quick tears
Dropped upon his glossy ears,
Or a sigh came double,—
Up he sprang in eager haste,
Fawning, fondling, breathing fast,
In a tender trouble.

XII

And this dog was satisfied
If a pale thin hand would glide
Down his dewlaps sloping.—
Which he pushed his nose within,
After,—platforming his chin
On the palm left open.

XIII

This dog, if a friendly voice
Call him now to blyther choice
Than such chamber-keeping,
"Come out!" praying from the
door,—

Presseth backward as before, Up against me leaping.

XIV

Therefore to this dog will I, Tenderly not scornfully, Render praise and favour: With my hand upon his head, Is my benediction said Therefore, and for ever.

XV

And because he loves me so,
Better than his kind will do
Often, man or woman,—
Give I back more love again
Than dogs often take of men,—
Leaning from my Human.

XVI

Blessings on thee, dog of mine, Pretty collars make thee fine, Sugared milk make fat thee! Pleasures wag on in thy tail— Hands of gentle motion fail Nevermore, to pat thee!

Downy pillow take thy head, Silken coverlid bestead, Sunshine help thy sleeping! No fly's buzzing wake thee up— No man break thy purple cup, Set for drinking deep in.

XVIII

whiskered cats arointed flee, stardy stoppers keep from thee Cologne distillations; juts lie in thy path for stones, and thy feast-day macaroons Turn to daily rations!

XIX

Mock I thee, in wishing weal?— Tears are in my eyes to feel Thou art made so straightly, Bessing needs must straighten too,— Intle canst thou joy or do, Thou who lovest greatly.

xx

Yet be blessed to the height by all good and all delight Pervious to thy nature, only loved beyond that line, with a love that answers thine, Loving fellow-creature!

THE FOURFOLD ASPECT

1

When ye stood up in the house With your little childish feet, And, in touching Life's first shows, First the touch of Love did meet.—

Love and Nearness seeming one,
By the heartlight cast before.

And, of all Beloveds, none Standing farther than the door—

Not a name being dear to thought,

With its owner beyond call,—
Nor a face, unless it brought
Its own shadow to the wall

Its own shadow to the wall,— When the worst recorded change Was of apple dropt from bough,—

When love's sorrow seemed more strange

Than love's treason can seem now.—

Then, the Loving took you up Soft, upon their elder knees,— Telling why the statues droop Underneath the churchyard

And how ye must lie beneath them,

Through the winters long and deep.

Till the last trump overbreathe them,

And ye smile out of your sleep . . .

Oh! ye lifted up your head, and it seemed as if they said

A tale of fairy ships

With a swan-wing for a sail!—

Oh! ye kissed their loving lips

For the merry, merry tale!—

So carelessly ye thought upon the Dead.

II

Soon ye read in solemn stories
Of the men of long ago—
Of the pale bewildering glories
Shining farther than we know,—
Of the heroes with the laurel,

Of the poets with the bay, Of the two worlds' earnest quarrel For that beauteous Helena,—

How Achilles at the portal Of the tent, heard footsteps nigh,

And his strong heart, half-immortal,

Met the *keitai* with a cry,— How Ulysses left the sunlight For the pale eidola race,

Blank and passive through the dun light,

Staring blindly on his face. How that true wife said to Pætus,

With calm smile and wounded heart,—

"Sweet, it hurts not!" how Admetus

Saw his blessed one depart. How King Arthur proved his mission.—

And Sir Roland wound his horn,—

And at Sangreal's moony vision Swords did bristle round like corn.

Oh! ye lifted up your head, and it seemed the while ye read.

That this death, then, must be found

A Valhalla for the crowned, The heroic who prevail.

None, be sure, can enter in Far below a paladin Of a noble, noble tale !-So awfully ye thought upon the Dead.

III

Ay, but soon ye woke up shrieking.-

As a child that wakes at night From a dream of sisters speaking In a garden's summer-light, -That wakes, starting up and

bounding. In a lonely, lonely bed.

With a wall of darkness round him.

Stifling black about his head !-And the full sense of your mortal Rushed upon you deep and

And we heard the thunder hurtle From the silence of the cloud! Funeral-torches at your gateway Threw a dreadful light within: All things changed! you rose up straightway.

And saluted Death and Sin. Since,-vour outward man has rallied.

And your eye and voice grown bold-

Yet the Sphinx of Life stands pallid.

With her saddest secret told. Happy places have grown holy; If ye went where once ye went, Only tears would fall down slowly,

As at solemn sacrament: Merry books, once read for pastime.

If ye dared to read again, Only memories of the last time Would swim darkly up the

brain: Household names, which used

to flutter Through your laughter una- And ye lifted up your head, and it wares.

God's Divine name ye could

With less trembling in your prayers!

Ye have dropt adown your head, and it seems as if ve tread

On your own hearts in the path Ye are called to in His

wrath.-And your prayers go up in

wail! -" Dost Thou see, then,

all our loss. O Thou agonised on cross?

Art Thou reading all its tale?"

So mournfully ye think upon the Dead.

Pray, pray, thou who also weep-

And the drops will slacken so :-Weep, weep; -and the watch thou keepest,

With a quicker count will go. Think:—the shadow on the dial For the nature most undone,

Marks the passing of the trial. Proves the presence of the sun. Look, look up, in starry passion, To the throne above the

spheres,-Learn; the spirit's gravitation Still must differ from the tear's. Hope, with all the strength thou

In embracing thy despair. Love: the earthly love thou losest

Shall return to thee more fair. Work; make clear the foresttangles

Of the wildest stranger-land. Trust: the blessed deathly an-

Whisper, "Sabbath hours at hand!"

By the heart's wound when most gory.

By the longest agony.

Smile!—Behold, in sudden glory The TRANSFIGURED smiles on thee!

seemed as if He said,

"My Beloved, is it so? Have ye tasted of My woe?-Of My Heaven ye shall not fail!"-

He stands brightly where the shade is.

With the keys of Death and Hades,

And there, ends the mournful tale.—

So hopefully ye think upon the Dead.

A FLOWER IN A LETTER

My lonely chamber next the sea, Is full of many flowers set free By summer's earliest duty; Dear friends upon the garden-walk Might stop amid their fondest talk, To pull the least in beauty.

II

A thousand flowers—each seeming one

That learnt by gazing on the sun
To counterfeit his shining—
Within whose leaves the holy dew
That falls from heaven, hath won
anew

A glory . . . in declining.

TIT

Red roses, used to praises long, Contented with the poet's song, The nightingale's being over; And lilies white, prepared to touch The whitest thought, nor soil it much, Of dreamer turned to lover.

TXT

Deep violets you liken to
The kindest eyes that look on you,
Without a thought disloyal;
And cactuses, a queen might don
If weary of a golden crown,
And still appear as royal.

37

Pansies for ladies all! I wis
That none who wear such brooches,
miss

A jewel in the mirror; And tulips, children love to stretch Their fingers down, to feel in each Its beauty's secret nearer.

VI

Love's language may be talked with these:

To work out choicest sentences, No blossoms can be meeter,— And, such being used in Eastern bowers,

Young maids may wonder if the flowers

Or meanings be the sweeter.

VII

And such being strewn before a bride, Her little foot may turn aside,

Their longer bloom decreeing,— Unless some voice's whispered sound Should make her gaze upon the ground

Too earnestly-for seeing.

VIII

And such being scattered on a grave, Whoever mourneth there, may have A type that seemeth worthy Of a fair body hid below, Which bloomed on earth a time ago,

Then perished as the earthy.

X

And such being wreathed for worldly feast,

Across the brimming cup some guest
Their rainbow colours viewing,
May feel them,—with a silent start,—
The covenant, his childish heart
With nature made,—renewing.

×

No flowers our gardened England hath,

To match with these in bloom and breath,

Which from the world are hiding In sunny Devon moist with rills,—A nunnery of cloistered hills,
The elements presiding.

ХI

By Loddon's streams the flowers are fair,

That meet one gifted lady's care
With prodigal rewarding,
For Beauty is too used to run
To Mitford's bower—to want the
sun

To light her through the garden,

But here, all summers are comprised— The nightly frosts shrink exorcised Before the priestly moonshine, And every Wind with stolèd feet In wandering down the alleys sweet Stens lightly on the sunshine.

XIII

And (having promised Harpocrate Among the nodding roses that No harm shall touch his daughters) Gives quite away the rushing sound, He dares not use upon such ground, To ever-trickling waters.

XIV

Yet, sun and wind! what can ye do, But make the leaves more brightly show

In posies newly gathered?—
I look away from all your best,
To one poor flower unlike the rest,—
A little flower half-withered.

XV.

I do not think it ever was A pretty flower,—to make the grass Look greener where it reddened; And now it seems ashamed to be Alone, in all this company, Of aspect shrunk and saddened.

XVI

A chamber-window was the spot It grew in, from a garden-pot, Among the city shadows: If any, tending it, might seem To smile, 'twas only in a dream Of nature in the meadows.

XVII

How coldly on its head did fall The sunshine, from the city wall In pale refraction driven! How sadly, plashed upon its leaves The raindrops, losing in the eaves The first sweet news of Heaven!

XVIII

And those who planted, gathered it In gamesome or in loving fit,
And sent it as a token
Of what their city pleasures be,—
For one, in Devon by the sea
And garden-blooms, to look on.

XIX

But she, for whom the jest was meant,

With a grave passion innocent
Receiving what was given,—
Oh! if, her face she turned then,
Let none say 'twas to gaze again
Upon the flowers of Devon!

 $\mathbf{x}\mathbf{x}$

Because, whatever virtue dwells
In genial skies—warm oracles
For gardens brightly springing.—
The flowers which grew beneath your
eyes,

Beloved friends, to mine supplies A beauty worthier singing!

THE MASK

I HAVE a smiling face, she said,
I have a jest for all I meet,
I have a garland for my head

And all its flowers are sweet,— And so you call me gay, she said.

TT

Grief taught to me this smile, she said, And Wrong did teach this jesting bold:

These flowers were plucked from garden-bed

While a death-chime was tolled—And what now will you say?—she said.

TTT

Behind no prison-grate, she said, Which slurs the sunshine half a mile,

Are captives so uncomforted, As souls behind a smile. God's pity let us pray, she said.

IV

I know my face is bright, she said,— Such brightness, dying suns diffuse!

I bear upon my forehead shed The sign of what I lose,— The ending of my day, she said.

If I dared leave this smile, she said, And take a moan upon my mouth, And tie a cypress round my head, And let my tears run smooth,—

It were the happier way, she said.

And since that must not be, she said, I fain your bitter world would leave. How calmly, calmly, smile the Dead, Who do not, therefore, grieve! The yea of Heaven is yea, she said.

VII

But in your bitter world, she said, Face-joy's a costly mask to wear, And bought with pangs long nourishel, And rounded to despair.

Grief's earnest makes life's play, she said.

VIII

Ye weep for those who weep?—
she said—

Ah fools!—I bid you pass them by!
Go, weep for those whose hearts
have bled.

What time their eyes were dry! Whom sadder can I say?—she said.

CALLS ON THE HEART

1

FREE HEART, that singest to-day, Like a bird on the first green spray, Wilt thou go forth to the world, Where the hawk hath his wing

unfurled

To follow, perhaps, thy way? Where the tamer, thine own will bind,

And, to make thee sing, will blind, While the little hip grows for the free behind?

Heart, wilt thou go?
—" No, no!
Free hearts are better so."

TT

The world, thou hast heard it told, Has counted its robber-gold, And the pieces stick to the hand. The world goes riding it fair and grand,

While the truth is bought and sold!

World-voices East, world-voices West,

They call thee, Heart, from thine early rest,

'Come hither, come hither and be our guest."

Heart, wilt thou go?
—" No no!
Good hearts are calmer so."

Who calleth thee, Heart? World's Strife,

With a golden heft to his knife:
World's Mirth, with a finger fine
That draws on a board in wine

Her blood-red plans of life:
World's Gain, with a brow knit
down:

World's Fame, with a laurel crown, Which rustles most as the leaves turn brownHeart, wilt thou go?

—" No, no!

Calm hearts are wiser so."

Hast heard that Proserpina (Once fooling) was snatched away, To partake the dark king's seat,— And that the tears ran fast on her feet

To think how the sun shone yesterday?

With her ankles sunken in asphodel She wept for the roses of earth which fell

From her lap when the wild car drave to hell.

Heart, wilt thou go?
—" No, no!

Wise hearts are warmer so."

v

And what is this place not seen, Where Hearts may hide serene? "'Tis a fair still house well kept, Which humble thoughts have swept,

Which humble thoughts have swept, And holy prayers made clean. There, I sit with Love in the sun, And we two never have done

Singing sweeter songs than are guessed by one."

Heart, wilt thou go?
—" No, no!

Warm hearts are fuller so."

VI

O Heart, O Love,—I fear
That Love may be kept too near.
Hast heard, O Heart, that tale,
How Love may be false and frail
To a heart once holden dear?

—"But this true Love of mine Clings fast as the clinging vine, And mingles pure as the grapes in wine."

Heart, wilt thou go?

—" No, no!
Full hearts beat higher so."

VII

O Heart, O Love, beware!— Look up, and boast not there. For who has twirled at the pin? 'Tis the world, between Death and Sin,—

The world, and the world's Despair!

And Death has quickened his pace

To the hearth, with a mocking face, Familiar as Love, in Love's own If I were thou, O eagle proud, place-

Heart, wilt thou go? " Still no!

High hearts must grieve even so."

The house is waste to-day,-The leaf has dropt from the spray, The thorn, prickt through to the song:

If summer doeth no wrong The winter will, they say. Sing, Heart! what Heart replies? In vain we were calm and wise, If the tears unkissed stand on in our

Heart, wilt thou go?
—" Ah, no!

Grieved hearts must break even so."

Howbeit all is not lost: The warm noon ends in frost, And worldly tongues of promise, Like sheep-bells, die off from us On the desert hills cloud-crossed! Yet through the silence, shall Pierce the death-angel's call,

And "Come up hither," recover all. Heart, wilt thou go?
—"I go!

Broken hearts triumph so."

WISDOM UNAPPLIED

If I were thou, O butterfly, And poised my purple wings to spy The sweetest flowers that live and die.—

I would not waste my strength on

As thou, -for summer hath a close, And pansies bloom not in the snows.

If I were thou, O working bee, And all that honey-gold I see Could delve from roses easily,

I would not hive it at man's door, As thou,-that heirdom of my store Should make him rich, and leave me poor.

And screamed the thunder back aloud, And faced the lightning from the cloud.

I would not build my eyrie-throne. As thou, -upon a crumbling store. Which the next storm may trample down.

If I were thou, O gallant steed, With pawing hoof, and dancing head, And eye outrunning thine own speed,

I would not meeken to the rein. As thou, -nor smooth my nostril plain

From the glad desert's snort and strain.

If I were thou, red-breasted bird, With song at shut up window heard, Live Love's sweet "Yes" too long deferred.

I would not overstay delight, As thou,—but take a swallow-flight. Till the new spring returned to sight.

While yet I spake, a touch was laid Upon my brow, whose pride did fade, As thus, methought, an angel said;

" If I were thou who sing'st this song, Most wise for others, and most strong In seeing right while doing wrong,

"I would not waste my cares, and choose,

As thou, -to seek what thou must Such gains as perish in the use.

"I would not work where none can

As thou, -half way 'twixt grief and

But look above, and judge within.

'I would not let my pulse beat high, As thou, -toward fame's regality, Nor yet in love's great jeopardy.

XVI

"I would not champ the hard cold

As thou, -of what the world thinks fit.-

But take God's freedom, using it.

XVII

"I would not play earth's winter out, As thou, -but gird my soul about And live for life past death and doubt.

"Then sing, O singer!—but allow Beast, fly, and bird, called foolish now, Are wise (for all thy scorn) as thou!"

THE CRY OF THE HUMAN

"THERE is no God," the foolish saith.-

But none. "There is no sorrow:" And nature oft, the cry of faith, In bitter need will borrow:

Eves, which the preacher could not school,

By wayside graves are raised; And lips say, "God be pitiful," Who ne'er said, "God be praised."

Be pitiful, O God!

The tempest stretches from the steep The shadow of its coming; The beasts grow tame, and near us

creep. As help were in the human. Yet, while the cloud-wheels roll and

grind.

We spirits tremble under !-The hills have echoes, but we find No answer for the thunder. Be pitiful, O God!

The battle hurtles on the plains-Earth feels new scythes upon her: We reap our brothers for the wains. And call the harvest . . . honour,— Draw face to face, front line to line.

One image all inherit,— Then kill, curse on, by that same sign, Clay, clay,—and spirit, spirit.

Be pitiful, O God!

The plague runs festering through the town.

And never a bell is tolling, And corpses, jostled 'neath the moon,

Nod to the dead-cart's rolling; The young child calleth for the cup-

The strong man brings it weeping: The mother from her babe looks up. And shrieks away its sleeping.

Be pitiful, O God!

The plague of gold strikes far and near.

And deep and strong it enters: This purple chimar which we wear,

Makes madder than the centaur's: Our thoughts grow blank, our words grow strange.

We cheer the pale gold-diggers— Each soul is worth so much on Change,

And marked, like sheep, with figures.

Be pitiful, O God!

The curse of gold, upon the land The lack of bread enforces—

The rail-cars snort from strand to strand.

Like more of Death's White horses! The rich preach "rights" and future days,

And hear no angel scoffing,— The poor die mute-with starving gaze On corn-ships in the offing. Be pitiful, O God!

VII

We meet together at the feast— To private mirth betake us-

We stare down in the winecup, lest Some vacant chair should shake us! We name delight, and pledge it

" It shall be ours to-morrow!" God's seraphs! do your voices sound

As sad in naming sorrow? Be pitiful, O God!

We sit together, with the skies, The steadfast skies, above us,

We look into each other's eyes,-" And how long will you love us?"-

The eyes grow dim with prophecy, The voices, low and breathless-"Till death us part!"—O words, to be Our best for love the deathless!

Be pitiful, O God!

We tremble by the harmless bed Of one loved and departed-Our tears drop on the lips that said Last night, "Be stronger-hearted!" O God,-to clasp those fingers close, And yet to feel so lonely !-To see a light upon such brows,

Which is the daylight only! Be pitiful, O God!

The happy children come to us, And look up in our faces: They ask us-Was it thus, and thus, When we were in their places?-We cannot speak ;-we see anew The hills we used to live in.

And feel our mother's smile press through

The kisses she is giving. Be pitiful, O God!

We pray together at the kirk, For mercy, mercy, solely-Hands weary with the evil work, We lift them to the Holy. The corpse is calm below our knee-Its spirit, bright before Thee— Between them, worse than either, we— Without the rest or glory! Be pitiful, O God!

We leave the communing of men,

The murmur of the passions, And live alone, to live again With endless generations. Are we so brave ?-The sea and sky In silence lift their mirrors, And, glassed therein, our spirits high Recoil from their own terrors. Be pitiful, O God!

We sit on hills our childhood wist. Woods, hamlets, streams, behold-

The sun strikes through the farthest.

The city's spire to golden. The city's golden spire it was, When hope and health were strongest,

But now it is the churchyard grass We look upon the longest.

XIV

And soon all vision waxeth dull— Men whisper, "He is dying:" We cry no more "Be pitiful!"— We have no strength for crying. No strength, no need! Then, soul of

Look up and triumph rather— Lo! in the depth of God's Divine. The Son adjures the Father-BE PITIFUL, O GOD!

A LAY OF THE EARLY ROSE

-" discordance that can accord." -Romaunt of the Rose.

A ROSE once grew within A garden April-green, In her loneness, in her loneness, And the fairer for that oneness.

A white rose delicate On a tall bough and straight! Early comer, early comer, Never waiting for the summer.

Her pretty gestes did win South winds to let her in, In her loneness, in her loneness, All the fairer for that oneness.

"For if I wait," said she, "Till time for roses be,-For the moss-rose and the musk-rose, Maiden-blush and royal-dusk rose,—

"What glory then for me In such a company?— Roses plenty, roses plenty, And one nightingale for twenty?

"Nay, let me in," said she, "Before the rest are free,— In my loneness, in my loneness, All the fairer for that oneness.

" For I would lonely stand. Uplifting my white hand, On a mission, on a mission, To declare the coming vision.

"' Upon which lifted sign, What worship will be mine? What addressing, what caressing! And what thanks and praise and blessing!

"A windlike joy will rush Through every tree and bush, Bending softly in affection Be pitiful, O God! And spontaneous benediction,

"Insects, that only may
Live in a sunbright ray,
To my whiteness, to my whiteness,
Shall be drawn, as to a brightness,—

"And every moth and bee Approach me reverently, Wheeling o'er me, wheeling o'er me, Coronals of motioned glory.

"Three larks shall leave a cloud, To my whiter beauty vowed— Singing gladly all the moontide,— Never waiting for the suntide.

"Ten nightingales shall flee Their woods for love of me,— Singing sadly all the suntide, Never waiting for the moontide.

"I ween the very skies Will look down with surprise, When low on earth they see me With my starry aspect dreamy!

"And earth will call her flowers
To hasten out of doors,—
By their curtsies and sweet-smelling,
To give grace to my foretelling."

So praying, did she win South winds to let her in, In her loneness, in her loneness, And the fairer for that oneness.

But ah!—alas for her!
No thing did minister
To her praises, to her praises,
More than might unto a daisy's.

No tree nor bush was seen To boast a perfect green, Scarcely having, scarcely having, One leaf broad enough for waving.

The little flies did crawl
Along the southern wall,—
Faintly shifting, faintly shifting
Wings scarce strong enough for lifting.

The lark, too high or low, I ween, did miss her so, With his nest down in the gorses, And his song in the star-courses.

The nightingale did please
To loiter beyond seas.
Guess him in the Happy islands,
Learning music from the silence.

Only the bee, forsooth, Came in the place of both

Doing honour, doing honour To the honey-dews upon her.

The skies looked coldly down, As on a royal crown, Then with drop for drop, at leisure, They began to rain for pleasure.

Whereat the Earth did seem To waken from a dream, Winter-frozen, winter-frozen, Her unquiet eyes unclosing—

Said to the Rose—"Ha, Snow! And art thou fallen so? Thou, who wert enthroned stately All along my mountains, lately?

"Holla, thou world-wide snow! And art thou wasted so? With a little bough to catch thee, And a little bee to watch thee?"

—Poor Rose, to be misknown! Would she had ne'er been blown, In her loneness, in her loneness,— All the sadder for that oneness!

Some word she tried to say— Some no...ah, wellaway! But the passion did o'ercome her, And the fair frail leaves dropped from her—

Dropped from her, fair and mute, Close to a poet's foot, Who beheld them, smiling slowly, As at something sad yet holy,—

Said, "Verily and thus
It chanceth eke with us
Poets singing sweetest snatches,
While that deaf men keep the
watches—

"Vaunting to come before Our own age evermore In a loneness, in a loneness, And the nobler for that oneness.

"Holy in voice and heart,— To high ends, set apart! All unmated, all unmated, Because so consecrated.

"But if alone we be, Where is our empery? And if none can reach our stature, Who can praise our lofty nature?

"What bell will yield a tone, Swung in the air alone?

If no brazen clapper bringing, Who can hear the chimed ringing?

"What angel, but would seem To sensual eyes, ghost-dim? And without assimilation, Vain is inter-penetration.

"And thus, what can we do, Poor rose and poet too, Who both antedate our mission In an unprepared season?

"Drop, leaf—be silent, song—Cold things we come among:
We must warm them, we must warm them,

Ere we ever hope to charm them.

"Howbeit" (here his face Lightened around the place,— So to mark the outward turning Of his spirit's inward burning)—

"Something it is, to hold In God's worlds manifold, First revealed to creature-duty, Some new form of His mild Beauty.

"Whether that form respect
The sense or intellect,
Holy be, in mood or meadow,
The Chief Beauty's sign and shadow!

"Holy, in me and thee,
Rose fallen from the tree,—
Though the word stand dumb around
us,

All unable to expound us.

"Though none us deign to bless, Blessed are we, nathless; Blessed still and consecrated, In that, rose, we were created.

"Oh, shame to poet's lays Sung for the dole of praise,— Hoarsely sung upon the highway With that 'Obolum da mihi.'

"Shame, shame to poet's soul Pining for such a dole, When Heaven-chosen to inherit The high throne of a chief spirit!

"Sit still upon your thrones,
O ye poetic ones!
And if, sooth, the world decry you,
Let it pass unchallenged by you!

"Ye to yourselves suffice, Without its flatteries.

Self-contentedly approve you Unto HIM who sits above you,—

"In prayers—that upward mount Like to a fair-sunned fount Which, in gushing back upon you, Hath an upper music won you,—

"In faith—that still perceives No rose can shed her leaves, Far less, poet fall from mission— With an unfulfilled fruition!

"In hope—that apprehends An end beyond these ends; And great uses rendered duly By the meanest song sung truly!

"In thanks—for all the good, By poets understood— For the sound of seraphs moving Down the hidden depths of loving,—

"For sights of things away, Through fissures of the clay, Promised things which shall be given And sung over, up in Heaven,—

"For life, so lovely-vain,— For death which breaks the chain,— For the sense of present sweetness,— And this yearning to completeness!"

BERTHA IN THE LANE

I
Put the broidery-frame away,
For my sewing is all done!
The last thread is used to-day,
And I need not join it on.
Though the clock stands at the
noon
I am weary! I have sewn,
Sweet, for thee, a wedding-gown.

Sister, help me to the bed,
And stand near me, Dearest-sweet;
Do not shrink nor be afraid,
Blushing with a sudden heat!
No one standeth in the street?
By God's love I go to meet,
Love I thee with love complete.

Lean thy face down! drop it in
These two hands, that I may hold
'Twixt their palms thy cheek and
chin,
Stroking back the curls of gold,

Tis a fair, fair face, in sooth— Larger eyes and redder mouth Than mine were in my first youth.

IV

Thou art younger by seven years—
Ah!—so bashful at my gaze,
That the lashes, hung with tears,
Grow too heavy to upraise?
I would wound thee by no touch
Which thy shyness feels as such—
Dost thou mind me, Dear, so
much?

Have I not been nigh a mother To thy sweetness—tell me, Dear? Have we not loved one another

Tenderly, from year to year, Since our dying mother mild Said with accents undefiled, "Child, be mother to this child!"

VI

Mother, mother, up in heaven, Stand up on the jasper sea, And be witness I have given All the gifts required of me,— Hope that blessed me, bliss that crowned,

Love, that left me with a wound, Life itself, that turneth round!

VII

Mother, mother, thou art kind,
Thou art standing in the room,—
In a molten glory shrined,
That rays off into the gloom!
But thy smile is bright and bleak
Like cold waves—I cannot speak,
I sob in it, and grow weak.

VIII

Ghostly mother, keep aloof
One hour longer from my soul—
For I still am thinking of
Earth's warm-beating joy and
dole!
On my finger is a ring

On my finger is a ring
Which I still see glittering,
When the night hides everything.

TX

Little sister, thou art pale!
Ah, I have a wandering brain—
But I lose that fever-bale,
And my thoughts grow calm again.
Lean down closer—closer still!
I have words thine ear to fill,—
And would kiss thee at my will.

x

Dear, I heard thee in the spring,
Thee and Robert—through the
trees,—

When we all went gathering
Boughs of may-bloom for the bees.
Do not start so! think instead
How the sunshine overhead
Seemed to trickle through the shade.

XI.

What a day it was, that day!
Hills and vales did openly
Seem to heave and throb away
At the sight of the great sky:
And the Silence, as it stood
In the Glory's golden flood,
Audibly did bud—and bud.

XII

Through the winding hedgerows green,
How we wandered, I and you,—
With the bowery tops shut in,
And the gates that showed the
view—

How we talked there! thrushes soft Sang our pauses out—or oft Bleatings took them, from the crof.

XIII

Till the pleasure grown too strong
Left me muter evermore;
And, the winding road being long,
I walked out of sight, before,
And so, wrapt in musings fond,
Issued (past the wayside pond)
On the meadow-lands beyond.

¥737

I sate down beneath the beech
Which leans over to the lane,
And the far sound of your speech
Did not promise any pain:
And I blessed you full and free,
With a smile stooped tenderly
O'er the may-flowers on my knee.

XV

But the sound grew into word
As the speakers drew more near—
Sweet, forgive me that I heard
What you wished me not to hear.
Do not weep so—do not shake—
Oh,—I heard thee, Bertha, make
Good true answers for my sake.

Yes, and HE too! let him stand
In thy thoughts, untouched by
blame.

Could he help it, if my hand
He had claimed with hasty claim?
That was wrong perhaps—but
then

Such things be—and will, again! Women cannot judge for men.

XVII

Had he seen thee, when he swore
He would love but me alone?
Thou wert absent,—sent before
To our kin in Sidmouth town.
When he saw thee who art best
Past compare and loveliest,
He but judged thee as the rest.

XVIII

Could we blame him with grave words,
Thou and I, Dear, if we might?
Thy brown eyes have looks like birds,
Flying straightway to the light:
Mine are older.—Hush!—look out—
Up the street! Is none without?
How the poplar swings about!

XIX

And that hour—beneath the beech,—
When I listened in a dream,
And he said in his deep speech,
That he owed me all esteem,—
Each word swam in on my brain
With a dim, dilating pain,
Till it burst with that last strain—

vv

I fell flooded with a Dark,
In the silence of a swoon—
When I rose, still cold and stark,
There was night,—I saw the moon:
And the stars, each in its place,
And the may-blooms on the grass,
Seemed to wonder what I was.

XXI

And I walked as if apart
From myself, when I could stand—
And I pitied my own heart,
As if I held it in my hand,—
Somewhat coldly,—with a sense
Of fulfilled benevolence,

And a "Poor thing" negligence. XXII

And I answered coldly too,

When you met me at the door;
And I only heard the dew

Dripping from me to the floor:
And the flowers I bade you see,

Were too withered for the bee,—
As my life, henceforth, for me.

XXIII

Do not weep so—Dear—heart-warm! It was best as it befell! If I say he did me harm, I speak wild,—I am not well. All his words were kind and good—He esteemed me! Only, blood Runs so faint in womanhood.

XXIV

Then I always was too grave,—
Liked the saddest ballads sung,—
With that look, besides, we have
In our faces, who dre young.
I had died, Dear, all the same—
Life's long, joyous, jostling game
Is too loud for my meek shame.

XXV

We are so unlike each other,
Thou and I, that none could guess
We were children of one mother,
But for mutual tenderness.
Thou art rose-lined from the cold,
And meant, verily, to hold
Life's pure pleasures manifold.

XXVI

I am pale as crocus grows
Close beside a rose-tree's root!
Whosoe'er would reach the rose,
Treads the crocus underfoot—
I, like may-bloom on thorn-tree—
Thou, like merry summer-bee!
Fit that I be plucked for thee.

XXVII

Yet who plucks me?—no one mourns— I have lived my season out,—

And now die of my own thorns
Which I could not live without.
Sweet, be merry! How the light.
Comes and goes! If it be night,
Keep the candles in my sight.

XXVIII

Are there footsteps at the door?
Look out quickly. Yea, or nay?
Some one might be waiting for
Some last word that I might say.
Nay? So best!—So angels would
Stand off clear from deathly road,
Not to cross the sight of God.

XXIX

Colder grow my hands and feet— When I wear the shroud I made, Let the folds lie straight and neat, And the rosemary be spread,— That if any friend should come, (To see *thee*, sweet!) all the room May be lifted out of gloom.

XXX

And, dear Bertha, let me keep
On my hand this little ring,
Which at night, when others sleep,
I can still see glittering.
Let me wear it out of sight,
In the grave,—where it will light
All the Dark up, day and night.

XXXI

On that grave, drop not a tear! Else, though fathom-deep the place,

Through the woollen shroud I wear, I shall feel it on my face.
Rather smile there, blessed one, Thinking of me in the sun—
Or forget me—smiling on!

XXXII

Art thou near me? nearer? so!

Kiss me close upon the eyes,
That the earthly light may go

Sweetly as it used to rise,
When I watched the morning-grey
Strike, betwixt the hills, the way

He was sure to come that day.

XXXIII

So,—no more vain words be said!—
The hosannas nearer roll—
Mother, smile now on thy Dead,
I am death-strong in my soul.
Mystic Dove alit on cross,
Guide the poor bird of the snows
Through the snow-wind above
loss!

XXXIV

Jesus, Victim, comprehending
Love's divine self-abnegation,—
Cleanse my love in its self-spending,
And absorb the poor libation!
Wind my thread of life up higher,
Up, through angels' hands of fire!—
I aspire while I expire!—

LOVED ONCE

I classed, appraising once,
Earth's lamentable sounds,—the welladay,

The jarring yea and nay, The fall of kisses on unanswering clay,

The sobbed farewell, the welcome mournfuller;—

But all did leaven the air

With a less bitter leaven of sure despair,

Than these words—"I loved ONCE."

TT

And who saith, "I loved ONCE?"
Not angels,—whose clear eyes, love,
love, foresee.

Love through eternity,

And, by To Love, do apprehend To Be.

Not God, called Love, His noble crown-name,—casting

A light too broad for blasting!
The great God changing not from
everlasting.

everlasting, Saith never, "I loved ONCE."

III

Oh, never the "Loved ONCE,"
Dost Thou say, Victim-Christ, misprized friend!
The cross and curse may rend,

But having loved Thou lovest to the end!

This is man's saying—man's. Too weak to move

One sphered star above,

Man desecrates the eternal God-word Love

With his No More, and Once.

IV

How say ye, "We loved once."
Blasphemers? Is your earth not cold enow,

Mourners, without that snow?

Ah, friends! and would ye wrong each other so?

And could ye say of some whose love is known.

Whose prayers have met your own,

Whose tears have fallen for you, whose smiles have shone,

Such words, "We loved them ONCE?"

v

Could ye, "We loved her once," Say calm of me, sweet friends, when out of sight?

When hearts of better right Stand in between me and your happy light? the shade.

Ye find my colours fade,

And all that is not love in me, decaved?

Such words—Ye loved me once!

Could ye, "We loved her once," Say cold of me when further put away

In earth's sepulchral clay? When mute the lips which deprecate

to-day?—

Not so! not then-least then! When Life is shriven,

And Death's full joy is given,-Of those who sit and love you up in Heaven,

Say not, "We loved them once."

Say never, ye loved once! God is too near above, the grave below,

And all our moments go

Too quickly past our souls, for saying

The mysteries of Life and Death avenge

Affections light of range— There comes no change to justify that And as loud es the birds, sing the

change,

And yet that word of ONCE Is humanly acceptive. Kings have said

Shaking a discrowned head, "We ruled once,"—dotards, "We

once taught and led,"-Cripples once danced i' the vines,and bards approved,

Were once by scornings, moved: But love strikes one hour-Love.

Those never loved, Who dream that they loved once.

A RHAPSODY OF LIFE'S

PROGRESS "Fill all the stops of life with tuneful breath." -Poems on Man, by Cornelius Matthews,1

We are borne into life—it is sweet, it is strange!

1 A small volume, by an American poet—as remarkable in thought and manner for a vital sinewy vigour, as the right arm of Pathfinder.

Or when, as flowers kept too long in We lie still on the knee of a mild Mystery,

Which smiles with a change! But we doubt not of changes, we know not of spaces;

The Heavens seem as near as our own mother's face is,

And we think we could touch all the stars that we see;

And the milk of our mother is white on our mouth:

And, with small childish hands, we are turning around The apple of Life which another has

found :-It is warm with our touch, not with

sun of the south,

And we count, as we turn it, the red side for four-O Life, O Beyond,

Thou art sweet, thou art strange evermore.

Then all things look strange in the pure golden ether:

We walk through the gardens with hands linked together,

And the lilies look large as the trees ;

bloom-loving bees,-Whatever comes—Loved once! And the birds sing like angels, so

mystical-fine; And the cedars are brushing the arch-

angel's feet, And time is eternity,-love is divine, And the world is complete.

Now, God bless the child,—father, mother, respond!

O Life, O Beyond, Thou art strange, thou art sweet.

Then we leap on the earth with the armour of youth,

And the earth rings again, And we breathe out, "O beauty," we cry out, "O truth,"

And the bloom of our lips drops with wine:

And our blood runs amazed 'neath the calm hyaline,-

The earth cleaves to the foot, the sun burns to the brain,-

What is this exultation? and what this despair?—

The strong pleasure is smiting the nerves into pain,

And we drop from the Fair, as we climb to the Fair,

And we lie in a trance at its feet; Help me, God, slay me, man!—one And the breath of an angel coldpiercing the air

Breathes fresh on our faces in swoon; ...

And we think him so near he is this side the sun,

And we wake to a whisper self-murmured and fond, O Life, O Beyond,

Thou art strange, thou art sweet!

And the winds and the waters in pastoral measures Go winding around us, with roll upon

. Till the soul lies within in a circle of pleasures

Which hideth the soul:

And we run with the stag, and we Strike the steel upon steel, strike the leap with the horse,

the broad water-course,

And we strike with the falcon, and Let the cloud meet the cloud in a hunt with the hound,

And the joy which is in us, flies out "While the eagle of Thought rides

we rejoice,"

That we lose the low moan of our brothers around,— And we shout so adeep down crea-

tion's profound We are deaf to God's voice—

And we bind the rose-garland on forehead and ears. Yet we are not ashamed.

And the dew of the roses that runneth unblamed

Down our cheeks, is not taken for tears.

Help us, God, trust us, man, love us, woman! "I hold

Thy small head in my hands,—with its grapelets of gold

Growing bright through my fingers,like altar for oath,

witnessing faces That watch the eternity strong in the With our sensual relations and social

troth-

I love thee, I leave thee,— Live for thee, die for thee! I prove thee, deceive thee,— Undo evermore thee!

is mourning for both!" And we stand up though young near

the funeral-sheet

Which covers the Cæsar and old Pharamond,

And death is so nigh us Life cools from its heat—

O Life, O Beyond,

Art thou fair,—art thou sweet?

Then we act to a purpose—we spring up erect-

We will tame the wild mouths of the wilderness-steeds.

We will plough up the deep in the ships double-decked,

We will build the great cities, and do the great deeds,-

soul upon soul,

And we swim with the fish through Strike the dole on the weal, overcoming the dole,—

grand thunder-roll!

with a wound,—
And we shout so aloud, "We exult, Who cares if the lightning is burning

the corn? Let us sit on the thrones In a purple sublimity,

And grind down men's bones To a pale unanimity. Speed me, God!—serve me, man!—I

am god over men! When I speak in my cloud, none shall

answer again-'Neath the stripe and the bond. Lie and mourn at my feet! "-

O thou Life, O Beyond, Thou art strange, thou art

Then we grow into thought,-and with inward ascensions

Touch the bounds of our Being! Neath the vast golden spaces like We lie in the dark here, swathed doubly around

conventions.

You are 'ware of a sight, yet are 'ware of a sound

Beyond Hearing and Seeing,-Are aware that a Hades rolls deep on all sides

With its infinite tides

Of our life creaks and bends as if ready for falling,

And through the dim rolling, we hear the sweet calling

Of spirits that speak, in a soft undertongue.

The sense of the mystical march; And we cry to them softly, "Come nearer, come nearer,

And lift up the lap of this Dark, and speak clearer.

And teach us the song that ve sung."

And we smile in our thought if they answer or no .-

For to dream of a sweetness is sweet as to know!

> Wonders breathe in our face And we ask not their name: Love takes all the blame Of the world's prison-place!

And we sing back the songs as we guess them, aloud:

And we send up the lark of our music that cuts

Untired through the cloud, To beat with its wings at the lattice Heaven shuts;

Yet the angels look down and the mortals look up

As the little wings beat,

pity or hope. 'Twixt the Heavens and the earth, can a poet despond?

O Life, O Beyond,

Thou art strange, thou art sweet!

Then we wring from our souls their applicative strength,

And bend to the cord the strong bow of our ken:

And bringing our lives to the level of others.

Hold the cup we have filled, to their uses at length-"Help me, God ! love me, man ! I am | Help me, God—help me, man ; I am

man among men.

And my life is a pledge Of the ease of another's!" From the fire and the water we drive out the steam

With a rush and a roar and the speed of a dream.

About and above us, -until the strong And the car without horses the car without wings Roars onward and flies

On its pale iron edge, 'Neath the heat of a Thought sitting

still in our eyes; And the hand knots in air, with the

bridge that if flings, Two peaks far disrupted by ocean and skies.-

And, lifting a fold of the smooth flowing Thames,

Draws under, the world with its turmoils and pothers,

While the swans float on softly, untouched in their calms

By Humanity's hum at the root of the springs!

And with reachings of Thought we reach down to the deeps Of the souls of our brothers,-

We teach them full words with our slow-moving lips

"God," "Liberty," "Truth." which they hearken and

And work into harmony, link upon link

Till the silver meets round the earth gelid and dense,

Shedding sparks of electric respondence intense On the dark of eclipse!

And the poet is blessed with their Then we hear through the silence and glory afar,

> As from shores of a star In aphelion,—the new generations that cry

> In attune to our voice and harmonious reply.

"God," Liberty," "Truth!" We are glorious forsooth— And our name has a seat,

Though the shroud should be donned!

O Life, O Beyond, Thou art strange, thou art sweet!

low, I am weak-

Death loosens my sinews and creeps in my veins:

My body is cleft by these wedges of pains.

From my spirit's serene;

And I feel the externe and insensate creep in

On my organised clay. I sob not, nor shriek, Yet I faint fast away!

I am strong in the spirit,-deepthoughted, clear-eyed,-

I could walk, step for step, with an angeh beside,

On the Heaven-heights of truth !

Oh, the soul keeps its youth— But the body faints sore, it is tired in the race,-

It sinks from the chariot ere reaching the goal.

It is weak, it is cold,

The rein drops from its hold— It sinks back, with the death in its

On, chariot—on, soul,— Ye are all the more fleet— Be alone at the goal Of the strange and the sweet!

Love us, God, love us, man! we believe, we achieve-Let us love, let us live, For the acts correspond—

We are glorious-and DIE! And again on the knee of a mild Mystery

> That smiles with a change. Here we lie. O DEATH, O BEYOND,

Thou art sweet, thou art strange!

L. E. L.'S LAST QUESTION "Do you think of me as I think of you?" (From her poem written during the voyage to the Cape.)

"Do you think of me as I think of you, My friends, my friends?"—She said Hers was the hand that played for it from the sea,

The English minstrel in her minstrelsy,

While under brighter skies than erst Would God, her heart's more inward she knew

Her heart grew dark,—and groped In that lone moment might confirm there, as the blind,

To reach across the waves friends left behind-

"Do you think of me as I think of you?"

It seemed not much to ask—As I of

We all do ask the same. No eyelids

Within the meekest eyes, that question over,-

And little in the world the Loving

But sit (among the rocks?) and listen

The echo of their own love evermore— "Do you think of me as I think of you?"

Love learned, she had sung of love and love,-

And, like a child that sleeping with dropt head

Upon the fairy-book he lately read, Whatever household noises round him move

Hears in his dream some elfin turbulence.—

Even so, suggestive to her inward sense.

All sounds of life assumed one tune of love.

And when the glory of her dream withdrew.-

When knightly gestes and courtly pageantries

Were broken in her visionary eyes By tears the solemn seas attested true,-

Forgetting that sweet lute beside her hand,

She asked not,—Do you praise me, O my land ?-

But,—" Think ye of me, friends, as I of you? "

many a year

Love's silver phrase for England,smooth and well!

oracle

her dear!

Her place was in the dust, too deep to hear.

Could she not wait to catch their answering breath?

content-content-with ocean's sound.

Which dashed its mocking infinite around

One thirsty for a little love ?-beneath

Those stars, content,—where last her song had gone,-They, mute and cold in radiant life,—

as soon Their singer was to be, in darksome

death? 1

Bring your vain answers-cry, "We think of thee!"

How think ye of her? warm in long

Delights?-or crowned with budding bays? Not so.

None smile and none are crowned where lieth she, -

With all her visions unfulfilled save one-

Her childhood's—of the palm-trees in the sun—

And lo! their shadow on her sepulchie!

"Do ye think of me as I think of you ? "--

friends,-O kindred,-O dear brotherhood

Of all the world! what are we, that we should

For covenants of long affection sue? Why press so near each other when the touch

Is barred by graves? Not much, and yet too much.

Is this "Think of me as I think of you."

But while on mortal lips I shape anew Silence at the door shall use A sigh to mortal issues, -verily

1 Her lyric on the Polar star came home with her latest papers.

. For when her questioned friends in Above the unshaken stars that see us

Made passionate response,—"We A vocal pathos rolls! and HE who think of thee,"— drew

All life from dust, and for all, tasted death, By death and life and love, appealing,

saith.

"Do you think of Me as I think of you?

THE HOUSE OF CLOUDS

I would build a cloudy House For my thoughts to live in, When for earth too fancy-loose, And too low for Heaven!

Hush! I talk my dream aloud-I build it bright to see,— I build it on the moonlit cloud,

To which I looked with thee.

Cloud-walls of the morning's grey, Faced with amber column,-Crowned with crimson cupola

From a sunset solemn! May-mists, for the casements, letch Pale and glimmering,

With a sunbeam hid in each, And a smell of spring.

Build the entrance high and proud, Darkening and then brightening Of a riven thunder-cloud, Veined by the lightning; Use one with an iris-stain

For the door within. Turning to a sound like rain As I enter in.

Build a spacious hall thereby: Boldly, never fearing, Use the blue place of the sky

Which the wind is clearing,— Branched with corridors sublime, Flecked with winding stairs— Such as children wish to climb, Following their own prayers.

In the mutest of the house. I will have my chamber: Evening's light of amber, Solemnising every mood, Softening in degree,-

Turning sadness into good, As I turn the key.

VI

Be my chamber tapestried
With the showers of summer, Close, but soundless,—glorified
When the sunbeams come here;
Wandering harpers, harping on
Waters stringed for such,—
Drawing colours, for a tune,
With a vibrant touch.

1711

Bring a shadow green and still
From the chestnut forest,
Bring a purple from the hill,
When the heat is sorest;
Spread them out from wall to wall,
Carpet-wove around,—
Whereupon the foot shall fall
In light instead of sound.

VIII

Bring the fantasque cloudlets home From the noontide zenith, Ranged for sculptures round the room,—
Named as Fancy weeneth;
Some be Junos, without eyes;
Naiads, without sources;
Some be birds of paradise,

TX

Some, Olympian horses.

Bring the dews the birds shake off, Waking in the hedges,—
Those too, perfumed for a proof,
From the lilies' edges:
From our England's field and moor,
Bring them calm and white in,
Whence to form a mirror pure
For Love's self-delighting.

x

Bring a grey cloud from the east
Where the lark is singing,
Something of the song at least
Unlost in the bringing;
That shall be a morning chair
Poet-dream may sit in,
When it leans out on the air,
Unrhymed and unwritten.

XI

Bring the red cloud from the sun!
While he sinketh, catch it;
That shall be a couch,—with one
Sidelong star to watch it,—

Fit for poet's finest Thought, At the curfew-sounding,— Things unseen being nearer brought Than the seen, around him.

XII

Poet's thought,—not poet's sigh!
'Las, they come together!
Cloudy walls divide and fly,
As in April weather!
Cupola and column proud,
Structure bright to see—
Gone! except that moonlit cloud
To which I looked with thee!

XIII

Let them! Wipe such visionings
From the Fancy's cartel—
Love secures some fairer things
Dowered with his immortal.
The sun may darken,—heaven be
bowed—
But still, unchanged shall be,—
Here in my soul,—that moonlit
cloud,
To which I looked with Thee!

CATARINA TO CAMOENS

DYING IN HIS ABSENCE ABROAD, AND REFERRING TO THE POEM IN WHICH HE RECORDED THE SWEETNESS OF HER EYES

I

On the door you will not enter,
I have gazed too long—adieu!
Hope withdraws her peradventure—
Death is near me,—and not you!
Come, O lover,
Close and cover
These poor eyes, you called, I ween,

These poor eyes, you called, I ween, "Sweetest eyes were ever seen."

When I heard you sing that burden

In my vernal days and bowers,
Other praises disregarding,
I but hearkened that of yours—
Only saying
In heart-playing,

"Blessed eyes mine eyes have been, If the sweetest, HIS have seen!"

III

But all changes. At this vesper, Cold the sun shines down the door. If you stood there, would you whisper "Love, I love you," as before.— Death pervading
Now, and shading
Eyes you sang of, that yestreen,
As the sweetest ever seen?

IV

Yes! I think, were you beside them, Near the bed I die upon,— Though their beauty you denied them, As you stood there, looking down,

You would truly Call them duly,

For the love's sake found therein,—
"Sweetest eyes were ever seen."

And if you looked down upon them,
And if they looked up to you,

All the light which has foregone them Would be gathered back anew! They would truly

Be as duly

Love - transformed to Beauty's sheen,—

"Sweetest eyes were ever seen."

v

But, ah me! you only see me
In your thoughts of loving man,
Smiling soft perhaps and dreamy
Through the wavings of my fan,—

And unweeting
Go repeating,
In your reverie serene,

"Sweetest eyes were ever seen."

While my spirit leans and reaches From my body still and pale, Fain to hear what tender speech is

In your love to help my bale—
O my poet,
Come and show it!

Come and show it! Come, of latest love, to glean "Sweetest eyes were ever seen."

O my poet, O my prophet, When you praised their sweetness so,

Did you think, in singing of it,
That it might be near to go?
Had you fancies
From their glances,

That the grave would quickly screen "Sweetest eyes were ever seen?"

No reply! The fountain's warble In the court-yard sounds alone.

As the water to the marble
So my heart falls with a moan,
From love-sighing
To this dying!

Death forerunneth Love to win "Sweetest eyes were ever seen."

Will you come? When I'm departed Where all sweetnesses are hid—

Where all sweetnesses are hid—' When thy voice, my tender-hearted, Will not lift up either lid.

> Cry, O lover, Love is over!

Cry beneath the cypress green— "Sweetest eyes were ever seen."

XI

When the angelus is ringing,
Near the convent will you walk,
And recall the choral singing
Which brought angels down our

talk? Spirit-shriven

I viewed Heaven, Till you smiled—" Is earth unclean, Sweetest eyes were ever seen?"

XII

When beneath the palace-lattice, You ride slow as you have done, And you see a face there—that is Not the old familiar one,—

Will you oftly Murmur softly,

"Here, ye watched me morn and e'en,

Sweetest eyes were ever seen!"

XIII

When the palace ladies sitting
Round your gittern shall have
said,

"Poet, sing those verses written For the lady who is dead,"— Will you tremble,

Yet dissemble,—
Or sing hoarse, with tears between,
"Sweetest eyes were ever seen?"

"Sweetest eyes!" how sweet in flowings,

The repeated cadence is! Though you sang a hundred poems, Still the best one would be this.

I can hear it 'Twixt my spirit

And the earth-noise intervene— "Sweetest eyes were ever seen!" χv

But the priest waits for the praying, And the choir are on their knees, And the soul must pass away in Strains more solemn high than these.

Miserere
For the weary—
Oh, no longer for Catrine
"Sweetest eyes were ever seen!"

XVI

Keep my riband; take and keep it,—
I have loosed it from my hair;
Feeling, while you overweep it,
Not alone in your despair,—
Since with saintly
Watch, unfaintly,

Out of Heaven shall o'er you lean "Sweetest eyes were ever seen."

XVII

But—but now—yet unremovèd
Up to Heaven, they glisten fast:
You may cast away, Belovèd,
In your future all my past!
Such old phrases
May be praises
For some fairer bosom-queen—
"Sweetest eyes were ever seen!"

XVIII

Eyes of mine, what are ye doing?
Faithless, faithless,—praised amiss
If a tear be of your showing,
Dropt for any hope of HIS!
Death has boldness
Besides coldness,
If unworthy tears demean
"Sweetest eyes were ever seen."

VIV

I will look out to his future—
I will bless it till it shine.
Should he ever be a suitor
Unto sweeter eyes than mine,
Sunshine gild them,
Angels shield them,
Whatsoever eyes terrene
Be the sweetest HIS have seen!

A PORTRAIT

"One name is Elizabeth."—BEN JONSON.

I WILL paint her as I see her.

Ten times have the lilies blown,
Since she looked upon the sun.

1 She left him the riband from her hair.

And her face is lily-clear—
Lily-shaped, and drooped in duty
To the law of its own beauty.

Oval cheeks encoloured faintly, Which a trail of golden hair Keeps from fading off to air:

And a forehead fair and saintly, Which two blue eyes undershine, Like meek prayers before a shrine.

Face and figure of a child,—
Though too calm, you think, and tender,
For the childhood you would lend

Yet child-simple, undefiled, Frank, obedient,—waiting still On the turnings of your will.

Moving light, as all young things,— As young birds, or early wheat When the wind blows over it.

Only, free from flutterings
Of loud mirth that scorneth
measure—
Taking love for her chief pleasure.

Choosing pleasures (for the rest)
Which comes softly—just as she,
When she nestles at your knee.

Quiet talk she liketh best, In a bower of gentle looks,— Watering flowers, or reading books.

And her voice, it murmurs lowly,
As a silver stream may run,
Which yet feels, you feel, the sun.

And her smile, it seems half holy, As if drawn from thoughts more far Than our common jestings are.

And if any poet knew her, He would sing of her with falls Used in lovely madrigals.

And if any painter drew her, He would paint her unaware With a halo round her hair.

And if reader read the poem,

He would whisper—"You have

done a

Consecrated little Una!"

And a dreamer (did you show him That same picture) would exclaim, "'Tis my angel, with a name!" And a stranger—when he sees her
In the street even—smileth stilly,
Just as you would at a lily.

And all voices that address her, Soften, sleeken every word,— As if speaking to a bird.

And all fancies yearn to cover The hard earth whereon she passes, With the thymy scented grasses.

And all hearts do pray, "God love her!" Ay, and certes, in good sooth,

We may all be sure HE DOTH.

SLEEPING AND WATCHING

SLEEP on, baby, on the floor, Tired of all the playing,— Sleep with smile the sweeter for That you dropped away in! On your curls' full roundness, stand Golden lights serenely-One cheek pushed out by the hand Folds the dimple inly: Little head and little foot Heavy laid for pleasure, Underneath the lids half-shut, Slants the shining azure :-Open-soul in noonday sun, So, you lie and slumber! Nothing evil having done, Nothing can encumber.

II
I, who cannot sleep as well,
Shall I sigh to view you?
Or sigh further to foretell
All that may undo you?
Nay, keep smiling, little child,
Ere the sorrow neareth,
I will smile too. Patience mild
Pleasure's token weareth.
Nay, keep sleeping before loss;
I shall sleep though losing!
As by cradle, so by cross,
Sure is the reposing.

And God knows Who sees us twain,
Child at childish leisure,
I am near as tired of pain
As you seem of pleasure;
Very soon too, by His grace
Gently wrapt around me,
Shall I show as calm a face,
Shall I sleep as soundly!

Differing in this, that you Clasp your playthings sleeping. While my hand shall drop the few Given to my keeping!
Differing in this, that I

Sleeping shall be colder,
And in waking presently,
Brighter to beholder!
Differing in this beside
(Sleeper, have you heard me?

Do you move, and open wide
Eyes of wonder toward me?)—
That while you I thus recall

From your sleep,—I solely,—Me from mine an angel shall,
With reveillie holy!

WINE OF CYPRUS

GIVEN TO ME BY H. S. BOYD, ESQ., AUTHOR OF "SELECT PASSAGES FROM THE GREEK FATHERS," ETC.,

To whom these stanzas are addressed

I IF old Bacchus were the speaker
He would tell you with a sigh,
Of the Cyprus in this beaker
I am sipping like a fly,—
Like a fly or gnat on Ida
At the hour of goblet-pledge,
By Queen Juno blushed aside, a
Full white arm-sweep, from the
edge.

Sooth, the drinking should be ampler, When the drink is so divine; And some deep-mouthed Greek exampler

Would become your Cyprus wine! Cyclop's mouth might plunge aright in,

While his one eye over-leered— Nor too large were mouth of Titan, Drinking rivers down his beard.

Pan might dip his head so deep in,
That his ears alone pricked out,
Fauns around him, pressing, leaping,
Each one pointing to his throat:
While the Naiads like Bacchantes,
Wild, with urns thrown out to
waste,

Cry,—"O earth, that thou wouldst grant us Springs to keep, of such a taste!"

IV

But for me, I am not worthy
After gods and Greeks to drink;
And my lips are pale and earthy
To go bathing from this brink.
Since you heard them speak the last

They have faded from their blooms, And the laughter of my pastime Has learnt silence at the tombs.

· v

Ah, my friend! the antique drinkers
Crowned the cup and crowned the
brow.

brow.
Can I answer the old thinkers
In the forms they thought of, now?
Who will fetch from garden-closes
Some new garlands while I speak,
That the forehead, crowned with
roses,
May strike scarlet down the cheek?

VI

Do not mock me! with my mortal, Suits no wreath again, indeed! Iam sad-voiced as the turtle Which Anacreon used to feed; Yet as that same bird demurely Wet her beak in cup of his,— So, without a garland, surely I may touch the brim of this.

VI

Go!—let others praise the Chian!—
This is soft as Muses' string—
This is tawny as Rhea's lion,
This is rapid as its spring,—
Bright as Paphia's eyes e'er met us,
Light as ever trod her feet!
And the brown bees of Hymettus
Make their honey not so sweet.

VIII

Very copious are my praises,
Though I sip it like a fly!—
Ah—but, sipping,—times and places
Change before me suddenly—
As Ulysses' old libation
Drew the ghosts from every part,
So your Cyprus wine, dear Grecian,
Stirs the Hades of my heart.

IX

And I think of those long mornings. Which my thought goes far to seek,

When, betwixt the folio's turnings, Solemn flowed the rhythmic Greek. Past the pane, the mountain spreading, Swept the sheep-bell's tinkling noise,

While a girlish voice was reading,—Somewhat low for ai's and oi's.

X

Then what golden hours were for us!—
While we sate together there,
How the white vests of the chorus
Seemed to wave up a live air!
How the cothurns trod majestic
Down the deep iambic lines;
And the rolling anapæstic
Curled like vapour over shrines!

XT

Oh, our Æschylus, the thunderous!
How he drove the bolted breath
Through the cloud, to wedge it ponderous

In the graphed ask basesth

In the gnarled oak beneath.
Oh, our Sophocles, the royal,
Who was born to monarch's place—
And who made the whole world loyal,
Less by kingly power than grace.

xII

Our Euripides, the human—
With his droppings of warm tears;
And his touches of things common,
Till they rose to touch the spheres!
Our Theocritus, our Bion,
And our Pindar's shining goals!—
These were cup-bearers undying,
Of the wine that's meant for souls.

XIII

And my Plato, the divine one,—
If men know the gods aright
By their motions as they shine on
With a glorious trail of light!—
And your noble Christian bishops,
Who mouthed grandly the last
Greek:

Though the sponges on their hyssops Were distent with wine—too weak.

XIV

Yet, your Chrysostom, you praised him,
With his liberal mouth of gold;
And your Basil, you upraised him
To the height of speakers old:

And we both praised Heliodorus For his secret of pure lies;— Who forged first his linked stories In the heat of lady's eyes.

And we both praised your Synesius For the fire shot up his odes, Though the Church was scarce propitions

As he whistled dogs and gods.— And we both praised Nazianzen For the fervid heart and speech; Only I eschewed his glancing At the lyre hung out of reach.

XVI

Do you mind that deed of Até Which you bound me to so fast,-Reading "De Virginitate," From the first line to the last?

How I said at ending, solemn, As I turned and looked at you, That St. Simeon on the column Had had somewhat less to do?

For we sometimes gently wrangled; Very gently, be it said,-Since our thoughts were disentangled By no breaking of the thread! And, I charged you with extortions On the nobler fames of old-Ay, and sometimes thought your Por-

Stained the purple they would fold.

For the rest—a mystic moaning Kept Cassandra at the gate, With wild eves the vision shone in— And wide nostrils scenting fate. And Prometheus, bound in passion By brute Force to the blind stone, Showed us looks of invocation Turned to ocean and the sun.

And Medea we saw burning At her nature's planted stake; And proud Œdipus fate-scorning While the cloud came on to break— While the cloud came on slow—slower. Till he stood discrowned, resigned!-

But the reader's voice dropped lower When the poet called him BLIND!

Ah, my gossip! you were older. And more learned, and a man !— Yet that shadow—the enfolder Of your quiet eyelids-ran Both our spirits to one level, And I turned from hill and lea

And the summer-sun's green revel.— To your eyes that could not see.

Now Christ bless you with the one Which goes shining night and day!

May the flowers which grow in sunlight Shed their fragrance in your way!

Is it not right to remember All your kindness, friend of mine. When we two sate in the chamber, And the poets poured us wine?

IIXX

So, to come back to the drinking Of this Cyprus,—it is well— But those memories, to my thinking, Make a better œnomel : And whoever be the speaker, None can murmur with a sigh— That, in drinking from that beaker. I am sipping like a fly.

THE ROMANCE OF THE SWAN'S NEST

"So the dreams depart, So the fading phantoms flee, And the sharp reality Now must act its part." WESTWOOD'S Beads from a Rosary.

LITTLE Ellie sits alone 'Mid the beeches of a meadow, By a stream-side, on the grass, And the trees are showering down Doubles of their leaves in shadow, On her shining hair and face.

She has thrown her bonnet by: And her feet she has been dipping In the shallow water's flow-Now she holds them nakedly In her hands, all sleek and dripping. While she rocketh to and fro.

Little Ellie sits alone,— And the smile, she softly uses, Fills the silence like a speech, While she thinks what shall be done.-

And the sweetest pleasure chooses. For her future within reach.

Little Ellie in her smile Chooses . . . "I will have a lover. Riding on a steed of steeds!
He shall love me without guile;
And to him I will discover
That swan's nest among the reeds.

"And the steed shall be red-roan, And the lover shall be noble, With an eye that takes the breath,—

And the lute he plays upon, Shall strike ladies into trouble, As his sword strikes men to death.

VI

"And the steed it shall be shod All in silver, housed in azure, And the mane shall swim the wind; And the hoofs along the sod Shall flash onward and keep measure, Till the shepherds look behind.

"But my lover will not prize
All the glory that he rides in,
When he gazes in my face.
He will say, 'O Love, thine eyes
Build the shrine my soul abides in,
And I kneel here for thy grace.'

VIII

"Then, ay, then—he shall kneel low,—

With the red-roan steed anear him
Which shall seem to understand—
Till I answer, 'Rise and go!
For the world must love and fear him
Whom I gift with heart and hand.'

"Then he will arise so pale,
I shall feel my own lips tremble
With a yes I must not say—
Nathless, maiden-brave, 'Fare
well,'

I will utter, and dissemble—
'Light to-morrow with to-day.'

"Then he will ride through the hills
To the wide world past the river,
There to put away all wrong;
To make straight distorted wills,
And to empty the broad quiver
Which the wicked bear along.

"Three times shall a young footpage
Swim the stream and climb the And kneel down beside my feet—
'Lo! my master sends this gage,
Lady, for thy pity's counting!
What wilt thou exchange for it?'

XII

* And the first time, I will send A white rosebud for a guerdon,—
And the second time, a glove:
But the third time—I may bend
From my pride, and answer— Pardon—

If he comes to take my love.'

XIII

"Then the young foot-page will run—

Then my lover will ride faster
Till he kneeleth at my knee:
'I am a duke's eldest son!
Thousand serfs do call me master,—
But, O love, I love but thee!'

"He will kiss me on the mouth
Then, and lead me as a lover
Through the crowds that praise his
deeds:

And, when soul-tied by one troth, Unto him I will discover That swan's nest among the reeds."

xv

Little Ellie, with her smile

Not yet ended, rose up gaily,—

Tied the bonnet, donned the

shoe—

And went homeward, round a mile, Just to see, as she did daily, What more eggs were with the two.

XVI

Pushing through the elm-tree copse, Winding up the stream, lighthearted,

Where the osier pathway leads—
Past the boughs she stoops—and
stops:

Lo! the wild swan had deserted—And a rat had gnawed the reeds.

XVII

Ellie went home sad and slow.
If she found the lover ever,
With his red-roan steed of steeds,
Sooth I know not! but I know
She could never show him—never,
That swan's nest among the reeds!

LESSONS FROM THE GORSE
"To win the secret of a weed's plain heart."
LOWELL.

Υ

MOUNTAIN gorses, ever golden,
Cankered not the whole year
long!
Do ye teach us to be strong,
Howsoever pricked and holden
Like your thorny blooms, and so
Trodden on by rain and snow,
Up the hill-side of this life, as bleak as
where ye grow?

II

Mountain blossoms, shining blossoms!

Do ye teach us to be glad
When no summer can be had,
Blooming in our inward bosoms?
Ye, whom God preserveth still,
Set as lights upon a hill,

Tokens to the wintry earth that Beauty liveth still!

III

Mountain gorses, do ye teach us From that academic chair Canopied with azure air, That the wisest word man reaches Is the humblest he can speak?

Ye, who live on mountain peak Yet live low along the ground, beside the grasses meek!

IV

Mountain gorses, since Linnæus Knelt beside you on the sod, For your beauty thanking God,— For your teaching ye should see us

Bowing in prostration new!
Whence arisen,—if one or two
Drops be on our cheeks—O world!
they are not tears, but dew.

THE DEAD PAN

Excited by Schiller's Götter Griechenlands, and partly founded on a well-known tradition mentioned in a treatise of Plutarch (De Oraculorum Defectu), according to which, at the hour of the Saviour's agony, a cry of "Great Pan is dead I" swept across the waves in the hearing of certain mariners,—and the oracles ceased.

It is in all veneration to the memory of the deathless Schiller, that I oppose a doctrine still more dishonouring to poetry than to Christianity.

—Е. В. В.

Gods of Hellas, gods of Hellas, Can ye listen in your silence? Can your mystic voices tell us
Where ye hide? In floating islands,
With a wind that evermore
Keeps you out of sight of shore?
Pan, Pan is dead,

TI

In what revels are ye sunken
In old Æthiopia?
Have the pygmies made you drunken,
Bathing in mandragora
Your divine pale lips that shiver
Like the lotus in the river?
Pan, Pan is dead.

TT

Do ye sit there still in slumber, In gigantic Alpine rows? The black poppies out of number Nodding, dripping from your brows To the red lees of your wine,— And so kept alive and fine? Pan. Pan is dead.

TV

Or lie crushed your stagnant corses Where the silver spheres roll on, Stung to life by centric forces Thrown like rays out from the sun?— While the smoke of your old altars Is the shroud that round you welters? Great Pan is dead.

v

"Gods of Hellas, gods of Hellas,"
Said the old Hellenic tongue!
Said the hero-oaths, as well as
Poets' songs the sweetest sung!
Have ye grown deaf in a day?
Can ye speak not yea or nay—
Since Pan is dead?

37

Do ye leave your rivers flowing All alone, O Naiades, While your drenchêd locks dry slow in This cold feeble sun and breeze?— Not a word the Naiads say, Though the rivers run for aye.

For Pan is dead.

VII

From the gloaming of the oak-wood, O ye Dryads, could ye flee? At the rushing thunderstroke, would No sob tremble through the tree?—Not a word the Dryads say, Though the forests wave for aye.

For Pan is dead.

VIII

Have ye left the mountain places, Oreads wild, for other tryst? Shall we see no sudden faces Strike a glory through the mist? Not a sound the silence thrills, Of the everlasting hills.

Pan, Pan is dead,

IX

O twelve gods of Plato's vision, Crowned to starry wanderings,— With your chariots in procession, And your silver clash of wings! Very pale ye seem to rise, Ghosts of Grecian deities—

Now Pan is dead.

X

Jove! that right hand is unloaded, Whence the thunder did prevail, While in idiocy of godhead Thou art staring the stars pale! And thine eagle, blind and old, Roughs his feathers in the cold.

Pan, Pan is dead.

KI.

Where, O Juno, is the glory
Of thy regal look and tread?
Will they lay, for evermore, thee
On thy dim, straight, golden bed?
Will thy queendom all lie hid
Meekly under either lid?
Pan. Pan is dead.

XII

Ha, Apollo! Floats his golden Hair all mist-like where he stands, While the Muses hang enfolding Knee and foot with faint wild hands? 'Neath the clanging of thy bow, Niobe looked lost as thou!

Pan. Pan is dead.

TITT

Shall the casque with its brown iron, Pallas' broad blue eyes, eclipse, And no hero take inspiring From the God-Greek of her lips? 'Neath her olive dost thou sit, Mars the mighty, cursing it?

Pan, Pan is dead.

XIX

Bacchus, Bacchus! on the panther He swoons,—bound with his own vines! And his Mænads slowly saunter, Head aside, among the pines, While they murmur dreamingly,—
"Evohe—ah—evohe—!"
Ah. Pan is dead.

xv

Neptune lies beside the trident, Dull and senseless as a stone; And Old Pluto deaf and silent Is cast out into the sun: Ceres smileth stern thereat,— "We all now are desolate— Now Pan is dead."

XVI

Aphrodite! dead and driven
As thy native foam, thou art;
With the cestus long done heaving
On the white calm of thine heart!
Ai Adonis! At that shriek,
Not a tear runs down her cheek—
Pan, Pan is dead.

XVII

And the Loves, we used to know from One another,—huddled lie, Frore as taken in a snow-storm, Close beside her tenderly,—
As if each had weakly tried Once to kiss her as he died.

Pan, Pan is dead.

XVIII

What, and Hermes? Time enthralleth
All thy cunning, Hermes, thus,—
And the ivy blindly crawleth
Round thy brave caduceus?
Hast thou no new message for us,
Full of thunder and Jove-glories?
Nay! Pan is dead.

xix

Crownèd Cybele's great turret
Rocks and crumbles on her head:
Roar the lions of her chariot
Toward the wilderness, unfed;
Scornful children are not mute,
"Mother, mother, walk a-foot—
Since Pan is dead."

vv

In the fiery-hearted centre
Of the solemn universe,
Ancient Vesta,—who could enter
To consume thee with this curse?
Drop thy grey chin on thy knee,
O thou palsied Mystery!
For Pan is dead

XXI

Gods! we vainly do adjure you,—Ye return nor voice nor sign!
Not a votary could secure you
Even a grave for your Divine!
Not a grave, to show thereby,
"Here these grey old gods do lie."
Pan, Pan is dead.

XXII

Even that Greece who took your wages,

Calls the obolus outworn:
And the hoarse deep-throated ages
Laugh your godships unto scorn—
And the poets do disclaim you,
Or grow older if they name you—
And Pan is dead.

TITXX

Gods bereaved, gods belated,
With your purples rent asunder!
Gods discrowned and desecrated,
Disinherited of thunder!
Now, the goats may climb and crop
The soft grass on Ida's top—
Now, Pan is dead.

XXIV

Calm, of old, the bark went onward, When a cry more loud than wind, Rose up, deepened, and swept sunward.

From the piled Dark behind; And the sun shrank and grew pale, Breathed against by the great wail— "Pan, Pan is dead."

VXV

And the rowers from the benches
Fell—each shuddering on his face,—
While departing Influences
Struck a cold back through the place;
And the shadow of the ship
Reeled along the passive deep—
"Pan, Pan is dead."

XXVI

And that dismal cry rose slowly
And sank slowly through the air,
Full of spirit's melancholy
And eternity's despair!
And they heard the words it said—
"PAN IS DEAD—GREAT PAN IS DEAD
—PAN, PAN IS DEAD."

XXVII

'Twas the hour when One in Sion Hung for love's sake on a crossWhen His brow was chill with dying, And His soul was faint with loss; When His priestly blood dropped downward, And His kingly eyes looked throne-

ward—

Then, Pan was dead.

XXVIII

By the love He stood alone in,
His sole Godhead rose complete;
And the false gods fell down moaning,
Each from off his golden seat—
All the false gods with a cry
Rendered up their deity—
Pan, Pan was dead.

XXIX

Wailing wide across the islands,
They rent, vest-like, their Divine!
And a darkness and a silence
Quenched the light of every shrine;
And Dodona's oak swang lonely
Henceforth, to the tempest only.
Pan, Pan was dead.

Pythia staggered,—feeling o'er her, Her lost god's forsaking look! Straight her eyeballs filmed with horror.

And her crispy fillets shook— And her lips gasped through their foam,

For a word that did not come.

Pan, Pan was dead.

IXXX

O ye vain false gods of Hellas, Ye are silent evermore! And I dash down this old chalice, Whence libations ran of yore. See! the wine crawls in the dust Wormlike—as your glories must! Since Pan is dead.

XXXII

Get to dust, as common mortals, By a common doom and track! Let no Schiller from the portals Of that Hades, call you back,—Or instruct us to weep all At your antique funeral.

Pan, Pan is dead.

HIXXX

By your beauty, which confesses Some chief Beauty conquering you,— By our grand heroic guesses, Through your falsehood, at the True,—

We will weep not . . . ! earth shall roll

Heir to each god's aureole—
And Pan is dead.

XXXIV

Earth outgrows the mythic fancies Sung beside her in her youth: And those debonair romances Sound but dull beside the truth. Phœbus' chariot-course is run. Look up, poets, to the sun! Pan, Pan is dead.

XXXV

Christ hath sent us down the angels; And the whole earth and the skies Are illumed by altar-candles
Lit for blessed mysteries;
And a Priest's hand, through creation,
Waveth calm and consecration—
And Pan is dead.

XXXVI

Truth is fair: should we forego it? Can we sigh right for a wrong? God Himself is the best Poet, And the real is His song. Sing His truth out fair and full, And secure His beautiful.

Let Pan be dead.

XXXVII

Truth is large. Our aspiration Scarce embraces half we be. Shame! to stand in His creation And doubt Truth's sufficiency!— To think God's song unexcelling The poor tales of our own telling— When Pan is dead.

XXXVIII

What is true and just and honest, What is lovely, what is pure—All of praise that hath admonisht,—All of virtue, shall endure,—These are themes for poets' uses, Stirring nobler than the Muses—Ere Pan was dead.

XXXIX

O brave poets, keep back nothing; Nor mix falsehood with the whole! Look up Godward! speak the truth in Worthy song from earnest soul! Hold, in high poetic duty, Truest Truth the fairest Beauty! Pan, Pan is dead. HECTOR IN THE GARDEN

Nine years old! The first of any Seem the happiest years that come:

Yet when I was nine, I said
No such word!—I thought, instead.

That the Greeks had used as many In besieging Ilium.

TT

Nine green years had scarcely brought me

To my childhood's haunted spring:

I had life, like flowers and bees In betwixt the country trees;

And the sun the pleasure taught me Which he teacheth every thing.

III

If the rain fell, there was sorrow;—
Little head leant on the pane,
Little finger drawing down it
The long trailing drops upon it,—
And the "Rain, rain, come to-morrow,"

Said for charm against the rain.

Such a charm was right Canidian,
Though you meet it with a jeer!
If I said it long enough,
Then the rain hummed dimly off,
And the thrush, with his pure Lydian,
Was left only, to the ear:

And the sun and I together Went a-rushing out of doors; We, our tender spirits, drew

Over hill and dale in view, Glimmering hither, glimmering thither,

In the footsteps of the showers.

V

Underneath the chestnuts dripping, Through the grasses wet and fair, Straight I sought my gardenground

With the laurel on the mound, And the pear-tree oversweeping A side-shadow of green air.

VII

In the garden lay supinely
A huge giant wrought of spade!

Arms and legs were stretched at length

In a passive giant strength,— And the meadow turf, cut finely, Round them laid and interlaid.

Call him Hector, son of Priam! Such his title and degree. With my rake I smoothed his

Both his cheeks I weeded through; But a rhymer such as I am, Scarce can sing his dignity.

Eves of gentianellas azure, Staring, winking at the skies; Nose of gillyflowers and box; Scented grasses put for locks-Which a little breeze, at pleasure, Set a-waving round his eyes.

Brazen helm of daffodillies, With a glitter toward the light; Purple violets, for the mouth, Breathing perfumes west and south;

And a sword of flashing lilies, Holden ready for the fight.

And a breastplate made of daisies, Closely fitting, leaf by leaf; Periwinkles interlaced Drawn for belt about the waist;

While the brown bees, humming praises, Shot their arrows round the chief.

And who knows (I sometimes wondered.) If the disembodied soul Of old Hector, once of Troy,

Might not take a dreary jov Here to enter—if it thundered Rolling up the thunder-roll?

Rolling this way from Troy-ruin, In this body rude and rife He might enter, and take rest 'Neath the daisies of the breast-They, with tender roots, renewing His heroic heart to life.

Who could know? I sometimes Did flap me on either cheek, to dry started

At a motion or a sound! Did his mouth speak—naming

With an orototoro?

Did the pulse of the Strong-hearted Make the daisies tremble round?

It was hard to answer, often: But the birds sang in the tree— But the little birds sang bold, In the pear-tree green and old,

And my terror seemed to soften Through the courage of their glee.

Oh, the birds, the tree, the ruddy And white blossoms, sleek with

Oh, my garden, rich with pansies! Oh, my childhood's bright romances!

All revive, like Hector's body, And I see them stir again!

And despite life's changes-chances, And despite the deathbell's toll, They press on me in full seeming !— Help, some angel! stay this dreaming!

As the birds sang in the branches Sing God's patience through my soul!

That no dreamer, no neglecter Of the present's work unsped, I may wake up and be doing, Life's heroic ends pursuing, Though my past is dead as Hector, And though Hector is twice dead.

FLUSH OR FAUNUS

You see this dog. It was but yesterday .

I mused forgetful of his presence here Till thought on thought drew downward tear on tear;

When from the pillow, where wetcheeked I lay,

A head as hairy as Faunus, thrust its

Right sudden against my face,—two golden-clear

Large eyes astonished mine,—a drooping ear

the spray!

I started first, as some Arcadian, Amazed by goatly god in twilight

But as my bearded vision closelier

My tears off, I knew Flush, and rose above

Surprise and sadness,—thanking the true Pan,

Who, by low creatures, leads to heights of love.

FINITE AND INFINITE

THE wind sounds only in opposing straits,

The sea, beside the shore; man's spirit rends

Its quiet only up against the ends
Of wants and oppositions, loves and
hates,

Where worked and worn by passionate debates,

And losing by the loss it apprehends, Its flesh rocks round, and every breath it sends

Is ravelled to a sigh. All tortured states

Suppose a straitened place. Jehovah Lord,

Make room for rest, around me! Out of sight

Now float me, of the vexing land abhorred!

Till, in deep calms of space, my soul may right

Her nature,—shoot large sail on lengthening cord,

And rush exultant on the Infinite.

THE RUNAWAY SLAVE AT PILGRIM'S POINT

I

I STAND on the mark beside the shore Of the first white pilgrim's bended knee,

Where exile turned to ancestor,
And God was thanked for liberty.
I have run through the night, my
skin is as dark.

I bend my knee down on this mark...
I look on the sky and the sea.

II

O pilgrim-souls, I speak to you! I see you come out proud and slow

From the land of the spirits pale as dew . . .

And round me and round me ye go! O pilgrims, I have gasped and run All night long from the whips of one

Who in your names works sin and

III

And thus I thought that I would come And kneel here where ye knelt before.

And feel your souls around me hum
In undertone to the ocean's roar;
And lift my black face, my black

hand, Here, in your names, to curse this land Ye blessed in freedom's evermore.

I am black, I am black;

And yet God made me, they say. But if He did so, smiling back

He must have cast His work away Under the feet of His white creatures, With a look of scorn,—that the dusky features

Might be trodden again to clay.

V

And yet He has made dark things To be glad and merry as light.

There's a little dark bird, sits and sings;

There's a dark stream ripples out of sight;

And the dark frogs chant in the safe morass,

And the sweetest stars are made to pass

O'er the face of the darkest night.

But we who are dark, we are dark!
Ah, God, we have no stars!

About our souls in care and cark Our blackness shuts like prison

The poor souls crouch so far behind, That never a comfort can they find

By reaching through the prisonbars.

VI

Indeed, we live beneath the sky, . . . That great smooth Hand of God stretched out

On all His children fatherly

To bless them from the fear and

doubt

Which would be, if, from this low place,

All opened straight up to His face Into the grand eternity.

VIII

And still God's sunshine and His frost,

They make us hot, they make us cold,

As if we were not black and lost:

And the beasts and birds, in wood
and fold.

Do fear and take us for very men! Could the whip-poor-Will or the cat of the glen

Look into my eyes and be bold?

IX

I am black, I am black!—

But, once, I laughed in girlish glee; For one of my colour stood in the track

Where the drivers drove, and looked at me—

And tender and full was the look he

Could a slave look so at another slave?
I look at the sky and the sea.

X,

And from that hour our spirits grew As free as if unsold, unbought:

Oh, strong enough, since we were two, To conquer the world, we thought! The drivers drove us day by day; We did not mind, we went one way And no better a freedom sought.

XI

In the sunny ground between the canes,

He said "I love you" as he passed: When the shingle-roof rang sharp with the rains,

I heard how he vowed it fast:
While others shook he smiled in the
hut

As he carved me a bowl of the cocoa-

Through the roar of the hurricanes.

I sang his name instead of a song;

Over and over I sang his name— Upward and downward I drew it along

My various notes,—the same, the same!

I sang it low, that the slave-girls near

Might never guess from aught they could hear,

It was only a name—a name.

I look on the sky and the sea. We were two to love, and two to

pray,—
Yes, two, O God, who cried to Thee,
Though nothing didst Thou say.
Coldly Thou sat'st behind the sun!

And now I cry who am but one, How wilt Thou speak to-day?—

w wiit fliou speak to-u

We were black, we were black!—
We had no claim to love and bliss,
What marvel, if each turned to wrack?
They wrung my cold hands out of

his,—
They dragged him . . . where?...
I crawled to touch

His blood's mark in the dust! . . . not much,

Ye pilgrim-souls, . . . though plain as this!

xv

Wrong, followed by a deeper wrong! Mere grief's too good for such as I. So the white men brought the shame ere long

To strangle the sob of my agony. They would not leave me for my dull Wet eyes!—it was too merciful

To let me weep pure tears and die.

XVI

I am black, I am black!—
I wore a child upon my breast...
An amulet that hung too slack

And, in my unrest, could not rest: Thus we went moaning, child and mother.

One to another, one to another, Until all ended for the best.

XVII

For hark! I will tell you low ...

I am black, you see,— And the babe who lay on my bosom

Was far too white . . . too white for me;

As white as the ladies who scorned to pray

Beside me at church but yesterday, Though my tears had washed a place for my knee.

XVIII

To look in his face, it was so white. I covered him up with a kerchief there;

I covered his face in close and tight: And he moaned and struggled, as well might be,

For the white child wanted his liberty-

Ha, ha! he wanted his masterright.

He moaned and beat with his head and feet.

He struck them out, as it was meet,

Against my heart to break it through.

I might have sung and made him mild-

But I dared not sing to the whitefaced child

The only song I knew.

I pulled the kerchief very close: He could not see the sun, I swear More, then, alive, than now he does From between the roots of the mango . . . where?

. . . I know where. Close! a child and mother

Do wrong to look at one another, When one is black and one is fair.

Why, in that single glance I had Of my child's face, I tell you all.

I saw a look that made me mad... The master's look, that used to fall On my soul like his lash...or worse!-

And so, to save it from my curse. I twisted it round in my shawl.

And he moaned and trembled from foot to head.

He shivered from head to foot; Till, after a time, he lay instead Too suddenly still and mute. I felt beside a stiffening cold, . . . I dared to lift up just a fold . . .

As in lifting a leaf of the mangofruit

XXIII

My own, own child! I could not bear But my fruit . . . ha, ha!-there, had been

> (I laugh to think on't at this hour!...)

Your fine white angels who have seen Nearest the secret of God's power, . . .

And plucked my fruit to make them

And sucked the soul of that child of

As the humming-bird sucks the soul of the flower.

His little feet that never grew- Ha, ha, the trick of the angels white!

They freed the white child's spirit

I said not a word, but, day and night, I carried the body to and fro;

And it lay on my heart like a stone . . . as chill.

-The sun may shine out as much as he will:

I am cold, though it happened a month ago.

From the white man's house, and the black man's hut,

I carried the little body on.

The forest's arms did round us shut, And silence through the trees did

They asked no question as I went,-They stood too high for astonishment,-

They could see God sit on His throne.

XXVI

My little body, kerchiefed fast,

I bore it on through the forest . . .

And when I felt it was tired at last, I scooped a hole beneath the moon Through the forest-tops the angels far With a white sharp finger from every

Did point and mock at what was done.

XXVII

Yet when it was all done aright, . . . Earth, 'twixt me and my baby, strewed, . . .

All changed to black earth. . . . nothing white. . . .

A dark child in the dark.—ensued Some comfort, and my heart grew

vonne:

I sate down smiling there and sung The song I learnt in my maiden-

XXVIII

And thus we two were reconciled. The white child and black mother. thus:

For, as I sang it, soft and wild The same song, more melodious, Rose from the grave whereon I sate! It was the dead child singing that, To join the souls of both of us.

XXIX

I look on the sea and the sky! Where the pilgrims' ships first anchored lav

The free sun rideth gloriously, But the pilgrim-ghosts have slid

Through the earliest streaks of the

My face is black, but it glares with a

Which they dare not meet by day.

Ah !--in their 'stead, their hunter sons!

Ah, ah! they are on me—thev hunt in a ring-

Keep off! I brave you all at once-I throw off your eyes like snakes that sting!

You have killed the black eagle at nest. I think:

Did vou never stand still in your triumph, and shrink

From the stroke of her wounded wing?

XXXI

(Man, drop that stone you dared to lift!--)

I wish you who stand there five a-breast,

Each, for his own wife's joy and gift, A little corpse as safely at rest

May keep live babies on her knee. And sing the song she likes the best.

XXXII

I am not mad: I am black. I see you staring in my face-

I know you staring, shrinking back-Ye are born of the Washingtonrace:

And this land is the free America: And this mark on my wrist . . .

(I prove what I sav)

Ropes tied me up here to the flogging-place.

IIIXXX

You think I shrieked then? Not a sound !

I hung, as a gourd hangs in the sun. I only cursed them all around

As softly as I might have done My very own child!—From these sands

Up to the mountains, lift your hands. O slaves, and end what I begun!

XXXIV

Whips, curses; these must answer those!

For in this Union, you have set Two kinds of men in adverse rows.

Each loathing each: and all forget The seven wounds in Christ's body

While HE sees gaping everywhere Our countless wounds that pay no debt.

XXXV

Our wounds are different. Your white men

Are, after all, not gods indeed, Nor able to make Christs again Do good with bleeding. We who bleed . . .

Stand off!) we help not in our loss! We are too heavy for our cross,

And fall and crush you and your seed.

XXXXI

I fall, I swoon! I look at the sky: The clouds are breaking on my brain:

I am floated along, as if I should die Of liberty's exquisite pain-

In the name of the white child, waiting for me

As mine in the mangos!—Yes, but In the death-dark where we may kiss and agree,

White men, I leave you all curse-free In my broken heart's disdain!

THE CRY OF THE CHILDREN

"φεθ, φεθ, τι προσδέρκεσθέ μ' δμμασιν, τέκνα."--- ΜΕDEA.

Do ye hear the children weeping, O my brothers,

Ere the sorrow comes with years? They are leaning their young heads against their mothers,-

And that cannot stop their tears. The young lambs are bleating in the meadows,

The young birds are chirping in the nest,

The young fawns are playing with the shadows.

The young flowers are blowing toward the west-

But the young, young children, O my brothers,

They are weeping bitterly !--They are weeping in the playtime of the others.

In the country of the free.

Do you question the young children in the sorrow,

Why their tears are falling so?— The old man may weep for his tomorrow

Which is lost in Long Ago— The old tree is leafless in the forest-The old year is ending in the frost-The old wound, if stricken, is the

sorest-

The old hope is hardest to be lost: But the young, young children, O my brothers,

> Do you ask them why they stand

Weeping sore before the bosoms of their mothers.

In our happy Fatherland?

They look up with their pale and sunken faces,

And their looks are sad to see, For the man's hoary anguish draws and presses

Down the cheeks of infancy-"Your old earth," they say, "is very dreary;"

"Our young feet," they say, " are But they answer, "Are your cowverv weak!

Few paces have we taken, yet are weary-

Our grave-rest is very far to seek. Ask the aged why they weep, and not the children,

For the outside earth is cold,

And we young ones stand without, in our bewildering,

And the graves are for the old.

"True," say the children, "it may happen

That we die before our time.

Little Alice died last year—the grave is shapen Like a snowball, in the rime.

We looked into the pit prepared to take her-

Was no room for any work in the close clay:

From the sleep wherein she lieth none will wake her,

Crying, 'Get up, little Alice! it is day.'

If you listen by that grave, in sun and shower.

With your ear down, little Alice never cries !-Could we see her face, be sure we

should not know her. For the smile has time for growing

in her eyes! And merry go her moments, lulled

and stilled in The shroud, by the kirk-chime! It is good when it happens," say the

children. "That we die before our time."

Alas, alas, the children! they are seeking

Death in life, as best to have! They are binding up their hearts

away from breaking, With a cerement from the grave. Go out, children, from the mine and

from the city-Sing out, children, as the little

thrushes do-

Pluck your handfuls of the meadowcowslips pretty-

Laugh aloud, to feel your fingers let them through!

slips of the meadows

Like our weeds anear the mine? Leave us quiet in the dark of the coalshadows.

From your pleasures fair and fine!

" For oh," say the children, " we are

And we cannot run or leap-If we cared for any meadows, it were merely

To drop down in them and sleep. Our knees tremble sorely in the

stooping-

We fall upon our faces, trying to go; And, underneath our heavy evelids drooping,

The reddest flower would look as

pale as snow.

For, all day, we drag our burden tiring Through the coal-dark, underground-

Or, all day, we drive the wheels of iron In the factories, round and round.

" For, all day, the wheels are droning, turning,-

Till our hearts turn, -our head, with pulses burning,

places-

Turns the sky in the high window

blank and reeling-Turns the long light that drops adown the wall-

Turn the black flies that crawl along

the ceiling-All are turning, all the day, and we with all.-

And all day, the iron wheels are droning

And sometimes we could pray, 'O ye wheels' (breaking out in a mad moaning),

'Stop! be silent for to-day!'"

Ay! be silent! Let them hear each other breathing

For a moment, mouth to mouth-Let them touch each other's hands, in a fresh wreathing

Of their tender human youth! Let them feel that this cold metallic notion

Is not all the life God fashions or reveals-

Let them prove their living souls against the notion

That they live in you, or under vou. O wheels !--

Still, all day, the iron wheels go on-

ward. Grinding life down from its mark: And the children's souls, which God is

calling sunward, Spin on blindly in the dark.

Now tell the poor young children, O my brothers,

To look up to Him and pray-So the blessed One, Who blesseth all the others.

Will bless them another day. They answer, "Who is God that He

should hear us. While the rushing of the iron wheels

is stirred? When we sob aloud, the human crea-

tures near us Pass by, hearing not, or answer not

a word: Their wind comes in our faces, - And we hear not (for the wheels in their resounding)

Strangers speaking at the door: And the walls turn in their Is it likely God, with angels singing

round Him, Hears our weeping any more?

"Two words, indeed, of praying we remember.

And at midnight's hour of harm, 'Our Father,' looking upward in the

chamber, We say softly for a charm.1

We know no other words, except 'Our Father.

And we think that, in some pause of angels' song,

God may pluck them with the silence sweet to gather,

And hold both within His right hand which is strong.

1 A fact rendered pathetically historical by Mr. Horne's report of his commission. The name of the poet of "Orion" and "Cosmo de' Medici" has, however, a change of associations; and comes in time to remind me that we have some noble poetic heat of literature still,—however we may be open to the reproach of being somewhat gelid in our humanity.

Our Father!' If He heard us, He would surely

(For they call Him good and mild)
Answer, smiling down the steep world
very purely,

'Come and rest with me, my child.'

xı

"But no!" say the children, weeping faster,

"He is speechless as a stone; And they tell us, of His image is the

master .

Who commands us to work on.
Go to!" say the children,—" Up in
Heaven,

Dark, wheel-like, turning clouds are all we find.

Do not mock us; grief has made us

unbelieving— We look up for God, but tears have

made us blind."

Do you hear the children weeping and

disproving,
O my brothers, what ye preach?
For God's possible is taught by His

world's loving— And the children doubt of each.

VII

And well may the children weep before you!

They are weary ere they run;

They have never seen the sunshine, nor the glory

Which is brighter than the sun: They know the grief of man, without his wisdom;

They sink in man's despair, without its calm—

Are slaves, without the liberty in Christdom,—

Christdom,—
Are martyrs, by the pang without

the palm,—
Are worn, as if with age, yet unretrievingly

The blessing of its memory cannot keep.—

Are orphans of the earthly love and heavenly:

Let them weep! let them weep!

They look up, with their pale and sunken faces,

And their look is dread to see, Forthey mind you of their angels in their places,

With eyes turned on Deity;—
"How long," they say, "how long,
O cruel nation,

Will you stand, to move the world, on a child's heart,—

Stifle down with a mailed heel its palpitation,

And tread onward to your throne amid the mart?

Our blood splashes upward, O goldheaper,

And your purple shows your path!

But the child's sob curses deeper in the silence

Than the strong man in his wrath!"

TWO SKETCHES

H.B.

I

The shadow of her face upon the wall May take your memory to the perfect Greek,

But when you front her, you would call the cheek

Too full, sir, for your models, if withal That bloom it wears could leave you critical,

And that smile reaching toward the rosy streak:—

For one who smiles so, has no need to speak

To lead your thoughts along, as steed to stall!

A smile that turns the sunny side o' the heart

On all the world, as if herself did win By what she lavished on an open mart.—

Let no man call the liberal sweetness, sin,—

While friends may whisper, as they stand apart,

"Methinks there's still some warmer place within."

A.B.

Her azure eyes, dark lashes hold in fee;

Her fair superfluous ringlets, without check,

Drop after one another down her neck,

As many to each cheek as you might But stand before him holy and unsee

Green leaves to a wild rose. This In week-day false conventions such sign outwardly,

And a like woman-covering seems to

Her inner nature. For she will not

World's sunshine with a finger. Sympathy

Must call her in Love's name! and then, I know,

She rises up, and brightens as she should.

And lights her smile for comfort, and is slow

In nothing of high-hearted fortitude. To smell this flower, come near it! such can grow

In that sole garden where Christ's brow dropped blood.

MOUNTAINEER AND POET

THE simple goatherd, between Alp and sky,

Seeing his shadow, in that awful tryst, Dilated to a giant's on the mist,

Esteems not his own stature larger by The apparent image, but more patiently

Strikes his staff down beneath his clenching fist-

While the snow-mountains lift their amethyst

And sapphire crowns of splendour, far and nigh.

Into the air around him. Learn from

Meek morals, all ye poets, that pursue Your way still onward, up to eminence!

Ye are not great, because creation

Large revelations round your earliest

Nor bright, because God's glory shines for you.

THE POET

THE poet hath the child's sight in his breast.

And sees all new. What oftenest he has viewed,

He views with the first glory. Fair and good

Pall never on him, at the fairest, best.

dressed

as would

Drag other men down from the altitude

Of primal types, too early dispossessed. Why, God would tire of all His heavens, as soon

As thou, O godlike, childlike poet, didst.

Of daily and nightly sights of sun and moon!

And therefore hath He set thee in the midst.

Where men may hear thy wonder's ceaseless tune.

And praise His world for ever, as thou bidst.

HIRAM POWERS' GREEK SLAVE

They say Ideal Beauty cannot enter The house of anguish. On the threshold stands

An alien Image with enshackled hands,

Called the Greek Slave! as if the artist meant her

(That passionless perfection which he lent her.

Shadowed, not darkened, where the sill expands)

To, so, confront man's crimes in different lands With man's ideal sense. Pierce to the

centre, Art's fiery finger!—and break up ere

long The serfdom of this world! Appeal,

fair stone. From God's pure heights of beauty

against man's wrong! Catch up in thy divine face, not alone East griefs but West, -and strike and

shame the strong, By thunders of white silence, overthrown.

LIFE

EACH creature holds an insular point in space:

Vet what man stirs a finger, breathes a sound.

But all the multitudinous beings

In all the countless worlds, with time Beneath Thy throne, and stars most and place

For their conditions, down to the Along the inferior gyres, and opencentral base.

Thrill, haply, in vibration and rebound,

profound,

In full antiphony, by a common grace !-

I think, this sudden joyaunce which illumes

may run

From some soul newly loosened from earth's tombs.

I think, this passionate sigh, which And by that dread response of curse half-begun

I stifle back, may reach and stir the Men alternate across these hemiplumes

Of God's calm angel standing in the Vouchsafe us such a half-hour's hush sun.

LOVE

We cannot live, except thus mutually,

We alternate, aware or unaware.

The reflex act of life: and when we

Our virtue outward most impulsively, Most full of invocation, and to be Most instantly compellant, certes, there

We live most life, whoever breathes most air.

And counts his dying years by sun and sea.

But when a soul, by choice and conscience, doth

Throw out her full force on another soul.

The conscience and the concentration both

Make mere life, Love. For life in perfect whole

And aim consummated, is Love in sooth,

nature's magnet-heat rounds pole with pole.

HEAVEN AND EARTH

"There was shence in heaven about the space of half-an-hour."—REVELATION viii. r.

God, Who, with thunders and great voices kept

silver-paced

faced

Melodious angels round,-canst intercept

Life answering life across the vast Music with music,—yet, at will, hast swept

All back (said he in Patmos placed), all back.

To fill the heavens with silence of the waste

A child's mouth sleeping, unaware Which lasted half-an-hour!-Lo, I, who have wept

All day and night, beseech Thee, by my tears.

and groan

spheres.

alone.

In compensation for our noisy years! As heaven has paused from song, let earth, from moan.

THE PROSPECT

METHINKS we do as fretful children. do:

Leaning their faces on the windowpane

To sigh the glass dim with their own breath's stain.

And shut the sky and landscape from their view.

And thus, alas! since God the maker drew

A mystic separation 'twixt those twain,

The life beyond us, and our souls in

We miss the prospect which we're called unto,

By grief we are fools to use. Be still and strong,

man, my brother! hold thy sobbing breath.

And keep thy soul's large window pure from wrong,-

That so, as life's appointment issueth. Thy vision may be clear to watch along

The sunset consummation-lights of death.

HUGH STUART BOYD 1 HIS BLINDNESS

God would not let the spheric Lights

This God-loved man, and bade the earth stand off

With all her beckoning hills, whose golden stuff

Under the feet of the royal sun is crossed.

Yet such things were to him not wholly lost,-

Permitted, with his wandering eyes light-proof,

To catch fair visions, rendered full enough

By many a ministrant accomplished ghost,-

And seeing, to sounds of softlyturned book-leaves,

Sappho's crown-rose, and Meleager's spring,

And Gregory's starlight, on Greekhurnished-eves!

Till Sensual and Unsensual seemed one thing.

one level,—earth's Viewed from reapers at the sheaves,

Scarce plainer than Heaven's angels on the wing!

HUGH STUART BOYD

HIS DEATH, 1848

BELOVED friend, who living many vears

With sightless eyes raised vainly to the sun,

Didst learn to keep thy patient soul

To visible nature's elemental cheers! God has not caught thee to new hemispheres

Because thou wast aweary of this one:-

1 To whom was inscribed, in grateful affection, my poem of "Cyprus Wine." There comes a moment in life when even gratitude and affection turn to pain, as they do now with me. excellent and learned man, enthusiastic for the good and the beautiful, and one of the most simple and upright of human beings, passed out of his long darkness through death in the summer of r848; Dr. Adam Clarke's daughter and biographer, Mrs. Smith (happier in this than the absent), fulfilling a doubly filial duty as she sate by the death-bed of her father's friend and

I think thine angel's patience first was done.

And that he spake out with celestial tears.

"Is it enough, dear God? then lighten so This soul that smiles in darkness!"

Steadfast friend.

Who never didst my heart or life misknow.

Nor either's faults too keenly apprehend.-

How can I wonder when I see thee go To join the Dead found faithful to the end?

HUGH STUART BOYD LEGACIES

THREE gifts the Dying left me,-Æschylus,

And Gregory Nazianzen, and a clock

Chiming the gradual hours out like a flock Of stars, whose motion is melodious.

The books were those I used to read from, thus

Assisting my dear teacher's soul to unlock The darkness of his eyes. Now,

mine they mock, Blinded in turn, by tears! now,

murmurous Sad echoes of my young voice, years

agone, Intoning from these leaves the

Grecian phrase, Return and choke my atterance. Books, lie down

In silence of the shelf within my gaze! And thou, clock, striking the hour's pulses on,

Chime in the day which ends these parting days!

FUTURE AND PAST

My future will not copy fair my past. I wrote that once; and, thinking at my side

My ministering life-angel justified The word by his appealing look

upcast To the white throne of God, I turned

And saw instead there, thee, -not unallied

To angels in thy soul! Then I, long tried

By natural ills, received the comfort

While budding at thy sight, my pilgrim's staff

Gave out green leaves with morning dews impearled.

—I seek no copy now of life's first half! Leave here the pages with long

musing curled,— And write me new my future's

And write me new my future's epigraph,

New angel mine, unhoped for in the world!

CONFESSIONS

1

FACE to face in my chamber, my silent chamber, I saw her!
God and she and I only, . . . there, I

sate down to draw her

Soul through the clefts of confession.
... Speak, I am holding thee fast,

As the angels of resurrection shall do it at the last.

"My cup is blood-red
With my sin," she said,
"And I pour it out to the
bitter lees.

As if the angels of judgment stood over me strong at the last,

Or as thou wert as these!"

II

When God smote His hands together, and struck out thy soul as a spark

Into the organised glory of things, from deeps of the dark,—

Say, didst thou shine, didst thou burn, didst thou honour the power in the form,

As the star does at night, or the firefly, or even the little groundworm?

"I have sinned," she said,
"For my seed-light shed

Has smouldered away from His first decrees!

The cypress praiseth the firefly, the ground-leaf praiseth the worm:

I am viler than these!"

II

When God on that sin had pity, and did not trample thee straight

With His wild rains beating and drenching thy light found inadequate:

When He only sent thee the northwinds, a little searching and

To quicken thy flame . . . didst thou kindle and flash to the heights of His will?

"I have sinned," she said, "Unquickened, unspread,

My fire dropt down, and I wept on my knees!

I only said of His winds of the north as I shrank from their chill, . . . What delight is in these?

IV

When God on that sin had pity, and did not meet it as such,

But tempered the wind to thy uses, and softened the world to thy touch,

At least thou wast moved in thy soul, though unable to prove it afar,

Thou couldst carry thy light like a jewel not giving it out like a star?
"I have sinned," she said,

" And not merited

The gift He gives, by the grace He sees!

The mine-cave praiseth the jewel, the hill-side praiseth the star:—

I am viler than these!"

V.

Then I cried aloud in my passion, . . . unthankful and impotent creature,

To throw up thy scorn unto God through the rents in thy nature! If He, the all-giving and loving, is

served so, what then

Hast thou done to the weak and the changing,... thy fellows of men?
"I have loved," she said,

(Words bowing her head As the wind bows the wet

acacia-trees!)
"I saw God sitting above me,—but
I...I sate among men,

And I have loved these."

Again with a lifted voice, ... like a trumpet that takes

The low note of a viol that trembles,

and triumphing breaks

On the air with it, solemn and clear "I have sinned not in this! Where I loved, I have loved much and well .- I have loved not

amiss.

Let the living," she said, "Enquire of the Dead.

In the house of the palefronted Images,-

And my own true Dead will answer for me, that I have not loved amiss

In my love for all these.

"The least touch of their hands in the morning, I keep day and night:

Their least step on the stair, still throbs through me, if ever so

light:

Their least gift, which they left to my childhood in long ago years,

Is now turned from a toy to a relic, and gazed at through tears. Dig the snow," she said.

" For my churchyard bed; Yet I, as I sleep, shall not fear to freeze.

If one only of these my beloveds shall love me with heart-warm tears, As I have loved these!

VIII

" If I angered any among them, my own life was sore;

If I fell from their presence, I clung to their memory more:

Their tender I often felt holy, their bitter I sometimes called sweet. And whenever their heart has refused me, I fell down straight at

their feet.

I have loved," she said,— "Man is weak, God is dread, Yet the weakest man dies with his spirit at ease,

Having poured such an oil of love but once on the Saviour's feet, As I lavished on these,"

Go, I cried, thou hast chosen the Human, and left the Divine!

Then, at least, have the Human shared with thee their wild-berry wine?

Have they loved back thy love, and when strangers approached thee with blame,

Have they covered thy fault with their kisses, and loved thee the

> But she wept and said, "God, over my head, Will sweep in the wrath of His judgment seas.

If indeed He shall deal with me sinning, but only the same,

And not gentler than these!"

A SABBATH MORNING AT SEA

THE ship went on with solemn face : To meet the darkness on the deep, The solemn ship went onward.

I bowed down weary in the place, For parting tears and present sleep Had weighed mine eyelids down-

ward.

Thick sleep, which shut all dreams from me,

And kept my inner self apart And quiet from emotion,

Then brake away and left me free, Made conscious of a human heart Betwixt the heaven and ocean.

The new sight, the new wondrous sight!

The waters round me, turbulent, The skies, impassive o'er me, Calm in a moonless, sunless light,

As glorified by even the intent Of holding the day-glory!

Two pale thin clouds did stand upon The meeting line of sea and sky, With aspect still and mystic:

I think they did foresee the sun, And rested on their prophecy In quietude majestic;

v

Then flushed to radiance where they stood.

Like statues by the open tomb Of shining saints half risen.— The sun!—he came up to be viewed,

And sky and sea made mighty room To inaugurate the vision!

VI

I oft had seen the dawnlight run,
As red wine, through the hills, and
break

Through many a mist's inurning; But here, no earth profaned the sun! Heaven, ocean, did alone partake The sacrament of morning.

VII

Away with joys fantastical!

I would be humble to my worth,
Self-guarded if self-doubted.

Though here no earthly shadows fall,

I, joying, grieving without earth, May desecrate without it.

VIII

God's Sabbath morning sweeps the waves:

I would not praise the pageant high And miss the dedicature!

I, drawn down toward the sunless graves

Byforce of natural things,—should I Exult in only nature?

IX

I could not bear to sit alone
In nature's fixed benignities
While my warm pulse was
moving.

Too dark thou art, O glittering sun, Too strait ye are, capacious seas, To satisfy the loving.

X

It seems a better lot than so,

To sit with friends beneath the
beech,

And call them dear and dearer; Or follow children as they go

In pretty pairs, with softened speech

As the church-bells ring nearer.

XI

Love me, sweet friends, this Sabbath day.

The sea sings round me while ye roll
Afar the hymn unaltered,

And kneel, where once I knelt, to pray, And bless me deeper in the soul, Because the voice has faltered.

XII

And though this Sabbath comes to me Without the stoled minister, And chanting congregation,

God's Spirit shall give comfort. He
Who brooded soft on waters drear,
Creator on creation

XIII

He shall assist me to look higher, Where keep the saints, with harp and song,

An endless Sabbath morning,
And on that sea commixed with fire,
Oft drop their eyelids raised too
long

To the full Godhead's burning.

HUMAN LIFE'S MYSTERY

I.

WE sow the glebe, we reap the corn, We build the house where we may rest,

And then, at moments, suddenly, We look up to the great wide sky, Enquiring wherefore we were born . . . For earnest, or for jest?

II

The senses folding thick and dark
About the stifled soul within,
We guess diviner things beyond,
And yearn to them with yearning
fond;

We strike out blindly to a mark Believed in, but not seen.

TIT

We vibrate to the pant and thrill
Wherewith Eternity has curled
In serpent-twine about God's seat!
While, freshening upward to His feet,
In gradual growth His full-leaved will
Expands from world to world.

IV

And, in the tumult and excess
Of act and passion under sun,
We sometimes hear—oh, soft and far,
As silver star did touch with star,
The kiss of Peace and Righteousness
Through all things that are done.

God keeps His holy mysteries
Just on the outside of man's dream!

In diapason slow, we think
To hear their pinions rise and sink,
While they float pure beneath His
eyes,

Like swans adown a stream.

VI

Abstractions, are they, from the forms Of His great beauty?—exaltations From His great glory?—strong previsions

Of what we shall be ?—intuitions Of what we are—in calms and storms, Beyond our peace and passions?

VII

Things nameless! which, in passing so,

Do stroke us with a subtle grace. We say, "Who passes?"—they are dumb;

We cannot see them go or come; Their touches fall soft—cold—as snow Upon a blind man's face.

VIII

Yet, touching so, they draw above Our common thoughts to Heaven's unknown.—

Our daily joy and pain, advance
To a divine significance,—
Our human love—O mortal love,
That light is not its own!

IX

And, sometimes, horror chills our blood

To be so near such mystic Things, And we wrap round us, for defence, Our purple manners, moods of sense— As angels, from the face of God, Stand hidden in their wings.

x

And, sometimes, through Life's heavy swound.

We grope for them !—with strangled breath

We stretch our hands abroad and try To reach them in our agony,—

And widen, so, the broad life-wound Which soon is large enough for death.

A CHILD'S THOUGHT OF GOD

1

THEY say that God lives very high!

But if you look above the pines,
You cannot see our God. And why?

TT

And if you dig down in the mines
You never see Him in the gold,
Though, from Him, all that's glory
shines.

TIT

God is so good, He wears a fold
Of heaven and earth across His
face—
Like secrets kept, for love, untold.

TYZ

But still I feel that His embrace
Slides down by thrills through all
things made,
Through sight and sound of every

place;

As if my tender mother laid On my shut lids, her kisses' pressure,

Half-waking me at night, and said "Who kissed you through the dark, dear guesser?"

THE CLAIM

I

GRIEF sate upon a rock and sighed one day:

(Sighing is all her rest!)
"Wellaway, wellaway, ah, wellaway!"

As ocean beat the stone, did she her breast . . .
"Ah, wellaway! . . . ah me! alas,

ah me!"
Such sighing uttered she.

signing uttered sne.

A Cloud spake out of heaven, as soft as rain

That falls on water,—" Lo, The Winds have wandered from me!

I remain

Alone in the sky-waste, and cannot

go
To lean my whiteness on the moun-

tain blue
Till wanted for more dew.

TTT

"The Sun has struck my brain to weary peace,

Whereby constrained and pale I spin for him a larger golden fleece Than Jason's, yearning for as full a sail!

Sweet Grief, when thou hast sighed to thy mind,

Give me a sigh for wind,

TV

"And let it carry me adown the west!"

But Love, who, prostrated, Lay at Grief's foot, . . . his lifted eyes possessed

Of her full image, . . . answered in her stead:

"Now nay, now nay! she shall not give away

What is my wealth, for any Cloud that flieth.

Where Grief makes moan, Love claims his own!

And therefore do I lie here night and day,

And eke my life out with the breath she sigheth."

LIFE AND LOVE

Fast this Life of mine was dying,
Blind already and calm as death,
Snowflakes on her bosom lying
Scarcely heaving with the breath.

Love came by, and, having known her
In a dream of fabled lands,

Gently stooped, and laid upon her Mystic chrism of holy hands;

Drew his smile across her folded Eyelids, as the swallow dips, . . Breathed as finely as the cold did, Through the locking of her lips.

So, when Life looked upward, being
Warmed and breathed on from
above.

What sight could she have for seeing, Evermore . . . but only Love?

INCLUSIONS

Ι

Oн, wilt thou have my hand, Dear, to lie along in thine?

As a little stone in a running stream, it seems to lie and pine!

Now drop the poor pale hand, Dear, . . . unfit to plight with thine.

II

Oh, wilt thou have my cheek, Dear, drawn closer to thine own?

My cheek is white, my cheek is worn, by many a tear run down.

Now leave a little space, Dear, . . . lest it should wet thine own.

III

Oh, must thou have my soul, Dear, commingled with thy soul?—

Red grows the cheek, and warm the hand,...the part is in the whole!...

Nor hands nor cheeks keep separate when soul is joined to soul.

INSUFFICIENCY

I

There is no one beside thee, and no one above thee;

Thou standest alone, as the nightingale sings!

And my words that would praise thee, are impotent things,

For none can express thee, though all should approve thee!

I love thee so, Dear, that I only can love thee.

Say, what can I do for thee? . . .

weary thee . . . grieve thee? Lean on thy shoulder . . . new burdens to add? . . .

Weep my tears over thee . . . making thee sad?

Oh, hold me not—love me not! let mo retrieve thee!

I love thee so, Dear, that I only can leave thee.

SONG OF THE ROSE ATTRIBUTED TO SAPPHO

IF Zeus chose us a King of the flowers in his mirth,

He would call to the rose, and would royally crown it,

For the rose, ho, the rose ! is the grace of the earth,

Is the light of the plants that are growing upon it!

For the rose, ho, the rose! is the eye of the flowers,

Is the blush of the meadows that feel themselves fair,—

Is the lightning of beauty, that strikes through the bowers

On pale lovers who sit in the glow nnaware.

Ho, the rose breathes of love! ho, the rose lifts the cup

To the red lips of Cypris invoked for a guest! Ho, the rose having curled its sweet

leaves for the world

Takes delight in the motion its petals keep up, As they laugh to the Wind as it

laughs from the west.

From Achilles Tatius.

A DEAD ROSE

O ROSE! who dares to name thee? No longer roseate now, nor soft, nor sweet.

But pale, and hard, and dry, as stubble-wheat,-

Kept seven years in a drawer-thy titles shame thee.

The breeze that used to blow thee, Between the hedge-row thorns, and take away

An odour up the lane to last all day,— If breathing now,-unsweetened would forego thee.

The sun that used to smite thee, And mix his glory in thy gorgeous

Till beam appeared to bloom, and flower to burn,-

If shining now,—with not a hue would light thee.

The dew that used to wet thee. And, white first, grow incarnadined, because

It lay upon thee where the crimson was,-

If dropping now,—would darken With a glance for one, and a glance where it met thee.

The fly that lit upon thee, To stretch the tendrils of its tiny feet Along thy leaf's pure edges after heat,-

If lighting now,—would coldly overrun thee.

The bee that once did suck thee. And build thy perfumed ambers up his hive,

And swoon in thee for joy, till scarce alive,-

If passing now,-would blindly overlook thee.

The heart doth recognise thee, Alone, alone! the heart doth smell thee sweet.

Doth view thee fair, doth judge thee most complete,-

Though seeing now those changes that disguise thee.

Yes, and the heart doth owe thee More love, dead rose! than to such roses bold

As Julia wears at dances, smiling cold !-

Lie still upon this heart-which breaks below thee!

A WOMAN'S SHORTCOMINGS

SHE has laughed as softly as if she sighed:

She has counted six and over. Of a purse well filled, and a heart well tried-

Oh, each a worthy lover!

They "give her time, " for her soul must slip

Where the world has set the groov-

She will lie to none with her fair red lip-

But love seeks truer loving.

She trembles her fan in a sweetness dumb.

As her thoughts were beyond recalling,

for some,

From her eyelids rising and falling; -Speaks common words with a blushful air,

-Hears bold words, unreproving; But her silence says—what she never will swear—

And love seeks better loving.

III

Go, lady! lean to the night-guitar,
And drop a smile to the bringer;
Then smile as sweetly, when he is far,
At the voice of an in-door singer!
Bask tenderly beneath tender eyes;

Glance lightly, on their removing; And join new vows to old perjuries— But dare not call it loving!

Unless you can think, when the song is done,

No other is soft in the rhythm; Unless you can feel, when left by one.

That all men beside go with him; Unless you can know, when unpraised by his breath,

That your beauty itself wants proving;

Unless you can swear—" For life, for death!"—

Oh, fear to call it loving!

v

Unless you can muse in a crowd all day,

On the absent face that fixed you; Unless you can love, as the angels may,

With the breadth of heaven betwixt you;

Unless you can dream that his faith is fast,

Through behoving and unbehoving; Unless you can *die* when the dream is past—

Oh, never call it loving!

A MAN'S REQUIREMENTS

I

Love me, sweet, with all thou art, Feeling, thinking, seeing,—
Love me in the lightest part,
Love me in full being.

II

Love me with thy open youth
In its frank surrender;
With the vowing of thy mouth,
With its silence tender.

III

Love me with thine azure eyes,
Made for earnest granting!
Taking colour from the skies,
Can Heaven's truth be wanting?

IV

Love me with their lids, that fall Snow-like at first meeting:

Love me with thine heart, that all The neighbours then see beating

. v

Love me with thine hand stretched out Freely—open-minded; Love me with thy loitering foot,— Hearing one behind it.

377

Love me with thy voice, that turns: Sudden faint above me; Love me with thy blush that burns: When I murmur "Love me!"

VII

Love me with thy thinking soul— Break it to love-sighing; Love me with thy thoughts that roll On through living—dying.

VIII

Love me in thy gorgeous airs,
When the world has crowned the e!
Love me, kneeling at thy prayers,
With the angels round thee.

IΧ

Love me pure, as musers do, Up the woodlands shady: Love me gaily, fast, and true, As a winsome lady.

x

Through all hopes that keep us brave, Further off or nigher, Love me for the house and grave,—And for something higher.

XI

Thus, if thou wilt prove me, dear, Woman's love no fable,

I will love thee—half-a-year—
As a man is able.

A YEAR'S SPINNING

7

He listened at the porch that day
To hear the wheel go on, and on,
And then it stopped—ran back
away—

While through the door he brought the sun:

But now my spinning is all done.

1

He sate beside me, with an oath That love ne'er ended, once begun: I smiled—believing for us both,
What was the truth for only one.
And now my spinning is all done.

My mother cursed me that I heard A young man's wooing as I spun. Thanks, cruel mother, for that word, For I have, since, a harder known!

For I have, since, a harder known And now my spinning is all done.

IV

I thought—O God!—my first-born's

Both voices to my ear would drown: I listened in mine agony—

It was the *silence*, made me groan! And now my spinning is all done.

Bury me 'twixt my mother's grave, Who cursed me on her death-bed lone.

And my dead baby's—(God it save!)
Who, not to bless me, would not moan.

And now my spinning is all done.

VI

A stone upon my heart and head, But no name written on the stone! Sweet neighbours! whisper low instead,

"This sinner was a loving one—And now her spinning is all done."

VII

And let the door ajar remain,
In case he should pass by anon;

And leave the wheel out very plain, That HE, when passing in the sun, May see the spinning is all done.

CHANGE UPON CHANGE

Five months ago, the stream did flow, The lilies bloomed within the sedge; And we were lingering to and fro,— Where pope will track thee in this

Where none will track thee in this snow,

Along the stream, beside the hedge. Ah, sweet, be free to love and go! For if I do not hear thy foot,

The frozen river is as mute,—
The flowers have dried down to
the root:

And why, since these be changed since May,

Shouldst thou change less than they?

II

And slow, slow, as the winter snow, The tears have drifted to mine eves:

And my poor cheeks, five months ago, Set blushing at thy praises so,

Put paleness on for a disguise. Ah, sweet, be free to praise and go! For if my face is turned to pale,

It was thine oath that first did fail,—

It was thy love proved false and frail!

And why, since these be changed, enow,

Should I change less than thou?

THAT DAY

Ι

I STAND by the river where both of us stood,

And there is but one shadow to darken the flood;

And the path leading to it, where both used to pass,

Has the step but of one, to take dew from the grass,—

One forlorn since that day.

II

The flowers of the margin are many to see,

For none stoops at my bidding to pluck them for me;

The bird in the alder sings loudly and long,

For my low sound of weeping disturbs not his song,

As thy vow did that day!

III Tuor T

I stand by the river—I think of the vow—

Oh, calm as the place is, vow-breaker, be thou!

I leave the flower growing—the bird, unreproved;— Would I trouble thee rather than

them, my beloved,
And my lover that day?

nd my lover that day

Go! be sure of my love—by that treason forgiven;

Of my prayers—by the blessings they win thee from Heaven:

Of my grief—(guess the length of the sword by the sheath's)

By the silence of life, more pathetic than death's!

Go,-be clear of that day!

A REED

I AM no trumpet, but a reed: No flattering breath shall from me lead A silver sound, a hollow sound! I will not ring, for priest or king, One blast that in re-echoing Would leave a bondsman faster

bound.

I am no trumpet, but a reed, -- . A broken reed, the wind indeed Left flat upon a dismal shore; Yet if a little maid, or child, Should sigh within it, earnest-mild. This reed will answer evermore.

I am no trumpet, but a reed: Go, tell the fishers, as they spread Their nets along the river's edge,-I will not tear their nets at all. Nor pierce their hands-if they should fall;

Then let them leave me in the sedge.

ACHILD'S GRAVE AT FLORENCE

A.A.E.C. BORN, JULY, 1848. DIED, NOVEMBER, 1849.

OF English blood, of Tuscan birth, ... What country should we give her? Instead of any on the earth, The civic Heavens receive her.

And here, among the English tombs, In Tuscan ground we lay her, While the blue Tuscan sky endomes Our English words of prayer.

A little child !-how long she lived, By months, not years, is reckoned: Born in one July, she survived Alone to see a second.

Bright-featured, as the July sun Her little face, still played in, And splendours, with her birth begun, Had had no time for fading.

So, LILY, from those July hours, No wonder we should call her; She looked such kinship to the flowers . . . Was but a little taller.

A Tuscan Lily,—only white . . . As Dante, in abhorrence Of red corruption, wished aright The lilies of his Florence.

We could not wish her whiter . . .

Who perfumed with pure blossom The house !- a lovely thing to wear Upon a mother's bosom!

VIII

This July creature thought perhaps Our speech not worth assuming: She sate upon her parents' laps, And mimicked the gnat's humming:

. . . Said "Father," "Mother"!then, left off; For tongues celestial, fitter.

Her hair had grown just long enough To catch Heaven's jasper-glitter.

Babes! Love could always hear and see Behind the cloud that hid them: "Let little children come to Me, And do not thou forbid them."

So, unforbidding, have we met, And gently here have laid her, Though winter is no time to get The flowers that should o'erspread her.

XII

We should bring pansies quick with spring, Rose, violet, daffodilly,

And also, above everything, White lilies for our Lily.

XIII

Nav, more than flowers, this grave exacts . . . Glad, grateful attestations

Of her sweet eyes and pretty acts,-With calm renunciations.

XIV

Her very mother with light feet Should leave the place too earthy, Saying, "The angels have thee, sweet, Because we are not worthy.'

xv

But winter kills the orange buds,-The gardens in the frost are; And all the heart dissolves in floods, Remembering we have lost her!

Poor earth, poor heart!—too weak, too weak.

To miss the July shining! Poor heart!—what bitter words we speak,

When God speaks of resigning!

Sustain this heart in us that faints. Thou God, the Self-Existent! We catch up wild at parting saints, And feel Thy Heaven too distant!

The wind that swept them out of sin. Has ruffled all our vesture : On the shut door that let them in. We beat with frantic gesture,-

To us, us also—open straight! The outer life is chilly-Are we, too, like the earth, to wait Till next year for our Lily?

-Oh, my own baby on my knees, My leaping, dimpled treasure,— At every word, I write like these, Clasped close, with stronger pressure!

XXI

Too well my own heart understands . .

At every word beats fuller . . . My little feet, my little hands, And hair of Lily's colour!

-But God gives patience, Love learns strength,

And Faith remembers promise. And Hope itself can smile at length On other hopes gone from us.

Love, strong as Death, shall conquer | And when, their dying couch about, Death.

Through struggle, made more glorious:

This mother stills her sobbing breath; Renouncing, yet victorious.

Arms, empty of her child, she lifts, With spirit unbereaven-"God will not all take back His gifts; "My Lily's mine in Heaven!

"Still mine!-maternal rights serene Not given to another! The crystal bars shine-faint between

The souls of child and mother.

" Meanwhile." the mother cries. "content!

Our love was well divided: Its sweetness following where she went,

Its anguish stayed where I did.

XXVII

"Well done of God, to halve the lot, And give her all the sweetness! To us, the empty room and cot,—

To her, the Heaven's completeness.

XXVIII

"To us, this grave—to her, the rows The mystic palm-trees spring in: To us, the silence in the house-To her, the choral singing!

XXIX

"For her, to gladden in God's view— For us, to hope and bear on !-Grow, Lily, in thy garden new, Beside the Rose of Sharon.

xxx

"Grow fast in Heaven, sweet Lily clipped.

In love more calm than this is,— And may the angels dewy-lipped Remind thee of our kisses!

XXXI

"While none shall tell thee of our

These human tears now falling, Till, after a few patient years, One home shall take us all in!"

Child, father, mother-who, left

Not mother, and not father !-The natural mists shall gather.

XXXIII

Some smiling angel close shall stand. In old Correggio's fashion,

Bearing a LILY in his hand. For death's ANNUNCIATION.

SONNETS FROM THE PORTUGUESE

I THOUGHT once how Theocritus had sung

Of the sweet years, the dear and wished for years,

Who each one in a gracious hand appears

To bear a gift for mortals, old or young:

And, as I mused it in his antique tongue.

I saw, in gradual vision through my

The sweet, sad years, the melancholy years, . . .

Those of my own life, who by turns had flung

A shadow across me. Straightway I was 'ware,

So weeping, how a mystic Shape did move

Behind me, and drew me backward by the hair;

And a voice said in mastery while I strove, . . .

"Guess now who holds thee?"-"Death!" I said. But, there, The silver answer rang, . . . " Not

Death. but Love.'

But only three in all God's universe Have heard this word thou hast said : Himself, beside

Thee speaking and me listening! and replied

One of us . . . that was God! . . . and laid the curse

So darkly on my eyelids as to amerce My sight from seeing thee,-that if I had died,

The deathweights, placed there, would have signified

Less absolute exclusion. "Nav" is worse

From God than from all others. O my friend!

Men could not part us with their My cricket chirps against thy mandoworldly jars.

Nor the seas change us, nor the tempests bend:

Our hands would touch for all the mountain-bars,-

And, heaven being rolled between us at the end.

We should but vow the faster for the stars.

Unlike are we, unlike, O princely Heart !

Unlike our uses and our destinies. Our ministering two angels look surprise

On one another, as they strike athwart Their wings in passing. Thou, bethink thee, art

A guest for queens to social pageant-

With gages from a hundred brighter eyes

Than tears even can make mine, to ply thy part

What hast thou Of chief musician. to do

With looking from the lattice-lights at me,

A poor, tired, wandering singer? ... singing through

The dark, and leaning up a cypress tree ? The chrism is on thine head,—on

mine, the dew,-And Death must dig the level where these agree.

Thou hast thy calling to some palace floor,

Most gracious singer of high poems! where

The dancers will break footing from the care

Of watching up thy pregnant lips for more.

And dost thou lift this house's latch. too poor

For hand of thine? and canst thou think and bear

To let thy music drop here unaware In folds of golden fulness at my door? Look up and see the casement broken

The bats and owlets builders in the roof!

lin.

Hush! call no echo up in further proof

Of desolation! there's a voice within That weeps . . . as thou must sing . . . alone, aloof.

I lift my heavy heart up solemnly, As once Electra her sepulchral urn, And, looking in thine eyes, I over-

The ashes at thy feet. Behold and see What a great heap of grief lay hid in

And how the red wild sparkles dimly

Through the ashen greyness. If thy foot in scorn

Could tread them out to darkness utterly,

It might be well perhaps. But if instead

Thou wait beside me for the wind to

The grey dust up, . . . those laurels on thine head,

O my beloved, will not shield thee so, That none of all the fires shall scorch and shred

The hair beneath. Stand farther off. then! Go.

Go from me. Yet I feel that I shall stand

Henceforward in thy shadow. Nevermore

Alone upon the threshold of my door Of individual life, I shall command The uses of my soul, nor lift my hand

Serenely in the sunshine as before,

Without the sense of that which I forebore, . . .

Thy touch upon the palm. The widest land

Doom takes to part us, leaves thy heart in mine

With pulses that beat double. What

And what I dream include thee, as the

Must taste of its own grapes. And when I sue

God for myself, He hears that name of thine.

And sees within my eyes, the tears of Go farther! Let it serve to trample two.

The face of all the world is changed, I think.

Since first I heard the footsteps of thy soul

Move still, oh, still, beside me, as they stole

Betwixt me and the dreadful outer brink

obvious death, where I who thought to sink

Was caught up into love and taught the whole

Of life in a new rhythm. The cup of dole

God gave for baptism, I am fain to drink.

And praise its sweetness, sweet, with thee anear.

The names of country, heaven, are changed away

For where thou art or shalt be, there or here:

And this . . . this lute and song . . . loved vesterday,

(The singing angels know) are only

Because thy name moves right in what they say.

What can I give thee back, O liberal And princely giver, . . . who hast brought the gold

And purple of thine heart, unstained, untold.

And laid them on the outside of the

For such as I to take, or leave withal. In unexpected largesse? Am I cold. Ungrateful, that for these most manifold

High gifts, I render nothing back at all?

Not so. Not cold !—but very poor instead t

Ask God who knows! for frequent tears have run

The colours from my life, and left so dead

And pale a stuff, it were not fitly done

To give the same as pillow to thy head.

Can it be right to give what I can give ?

To let thee sit beneath the fall of

As salt as mine, and hear the sighing

Re-sighing on my lips renunciative Through those infrequent smiles which fail to live

For all thy adjurations? O my fears.

That this can scarce be right! We

are not peers,

So to be lovers; and I own and grieve

That givers of such gifts as mine are, must

Be counted with the ungenerous. Out, alas!

I will not soil thy purple with my dust,

Nor breathe my poison on thy Venice-glass,

Nor give thee any love . . . which were unjust.

Beloved, I only love thee! let it pass.

Yet, love, mere love, is beautiful indeed

And worthy of acceptation. Fire is bright, Let temple burn, or flax! An equal

Leaps in the flame from cedar-plank

or weed. And love is fire: and when I say at

need I love thee . . . mark! . . . ! love

thee ! . . . in thy sight I stand transfigured, glorified aright, With conscience of the new rays that

proceed Out of my face toward thine. There's

nothing low In love, when love the lowest:

meanest creatures Who love God, God accepts while loving so.

And what I feel, across the inferior features

Of what I am, doth flash itself, and show

How that great work of Love enhances Nature's.

And therefore if to love can be desert, I am not all unworthy. Cheeks as pale

As these you see, and trembling knees

that fail To bear the burden of a heavy heart,— This weary minstrel-life that once

was girt

To climb Aornus, and can scarce avail To pipe now 'gainst the woodland nightingale

A melancholy music! . . . why advert

To these things? O Beloved, it is plain

I am not of thy worth nor for thy place:

And yet because I love thee I obtain From that same love this vindicating

To live on still in love and yet in vain, . . .

To bless thee yet renounce thee to thy face.

Indeed, this very love which is my boast,

And which, when rising up from breast to brow, Doth crown me with a ruby large

enow To draw men's eyes and prove the inner cost. .

This love even, all my worth, to the uttermost,

I should not love withal, unless that

Hadst set me an example, shown me how,

When first thine earnest eyes with mine were crossed,

And love called love. And thus, I cannot speak

Of love even, as a good thing of my own.

Thy soul hath snatched up mine all faint and weak.

And placed it by thee on a golden throne,-

And that I love (O soul, I must be meek!)

Is by thee only, whom I love alone.

And wilt thou have me fashion into speech

The love I bear thee, finding words enough,

And hold the torch out, while the winds are rough,

Between our faces, to cast light on each?—

I dropt it at thy feet. I cannot teach My hand to hold my spirit so far off From myself...me...that I should bring thee proof

In words, of love hid in me out of reach.

Nay, let the silence of my womanhood Commend my woman-love to thy belief,—

Seeing that I stand unwon, however wooed,

And rend the garment of my life, in brief,

in brief, By a most dauntless, voiceless forti-

tude,
Lest one touch of this heart convey
its grief.

XIV

If thou must love me, let it be for nought

Except for love's sake only. Do not say,
"I love her for her smile . . . her

look . . . her way

Of speaking gently, . . . for a trick of thought

That falls in well with mine, and, certes, brought

A sense of pleasant ease on such a day "—

For these things in themselves, Beloved, may
Be changed, or change for thee,—

and love so wrought,

May be unwrought so. Neither love me for Thine own dear pity's wiping my

cheeks dry,— Since one might well forget to weep

who bore
Thy comfort long, and lose thy love
thereby.

But love me for love's sake, that evermore

Thou may'st love on through love's eternity.

XV

Accuse me not, beseech thee, that I wear

Too calm and sad a face in front of thine;

For we two look two ways, and cannot shine

With the same sunlight on our brow and hair.

On me thou lookest, with no doubting care,

As on a bee shut in a crystalline,—
For sorrow hath shut me safe in love's divine.

And to spread wing and fly in the outer air

Were most impossible failure, if I strove

To fail so: But I look on thee . . . on thee . . .

Beholding, besides love, the end of love,

Hearing oblivion beyond memory . . . As one who sits and gazes from above, Over the rivers to the bitter sea.

XVI

And yet, because thou overcomest so, Because thou art more noble and like a king,

Thou canst prevail against my fears and fling

Thy purple round me, till my heart shall grow

Too close against thine heart, hence forth to know

How it shook when alone. Why,
conquering

May prove as lordly and complete a thing
In lifting upward as in crushing low:

And, as a soldier struck down by a sword

May cry, "My strife ends here," and sink to earth,

Even so, Beloved, I at last record, Here ends my doubt! If thou invite me forth,

I rise above abasement at the word Make thy love larger to enlarge my worth.

XVII

My poet, thou canst touch on all the notes

God set between His After and Before, And strike up and strike off the general roar

Of the rushing worlds, a melody that floats

In a serene air purely. Antidotes Of medicated music, answering for Mankind's forlornest uses, thou canst pour

From thence into their ears. God's will devotes

Thine to such ends, and mine to wait on thine!

How, Dearest, wilt thou have me for most use?

A hope, to sing by gladly? . . . or a fine

Sad memory, with thy songs to interfuse?...

A shade, in which to sing . . . of palm or pine?

A grave, on which to rest from singing?
... Choose.

XVIII

I never gave a lock of hair away
To a man, Dearest, except this to
thee,
Which you upon my fingers thought-

fully
I ring out to the full brown length.

and say, "Take it." My day of youth went

yesterday ; My hair no longer bounds to my foot's

Nor plant I it from rose or myrtletree,

As girls do, any more. It only may Now shade on two pale cheeks, the mark of tears,

Taught drooping from the head that hangs aside

Through sorrow's trick. I thought the funeral shears Would take this first, but Love is

justified;

Take it thou, . . finding pure, from all those years,

The kiss my mother left here when she died.

XIX

The soul's Rialto hath its merchandise;

I barter curl for curl upon that mart; And from my poet's forehead to my heart,

Receive this lock which outweighs argosies,—

As purply black, as erst to Pindar's eyes

The dim purpureal tresses gloomed athwart

The nine white Muse-brows. For this counterpart, . . .

Thy bay-crown's shade, Beloved, I surmise.

Still lingers on thy curl, it is so black! Thus, with a fillet of smooth-kissing breath,

I tie the shadow safe from gliding back,

And lay the gift where nothing hindereth,

Here on my heart as on thy brow, to lack

No natural heat till mine grows cold in death.

xx

Beloved, my Beloved, when I think That thou wast in the world a year ago,

What time I sate alone here in the snow

And saw no footprint, heard the silence sink

No moment at thy voice, ... but link by link

When counting all my chains as if that so

They never could fall off at any blow Struck by thy possible hand . . . why, thus I drink

Of life's great cup of wonder. Wonderful,

Never to feel thee thrill the day or night

With personal act or speech,—nor ever cull

Some prescience of thee with the blossoms white

Thou sawest growing! Atheists are as dull,

Who cannot guess God's presence out of sight.

XXI

Say over again and yet once over again

That thou dost love me. Though the word repeated

Should seem "a cuckoo-song," as thou dost treat it,

Remember never to the hill or plain, Valley and wood, without her cuckoostrain. Comes the fresh Spring in all her green completed!

Beloved, I, amid the darkness greeted By a doubtful spirit-voice, in that doubt's pain

Cry . . . speak once more . . . thou lovest! Who can fear

Too many stars, though each in heaven shall roll—

Too many flowers, though each shall crown the year?

Say thou dost love me, love me, love me—toll

The silver iterance!—only minding, Dear,

To love me also in silence, with thy soul.

XXII

When our two souls stand up erect and strong,

Face to face, silent, drawing nigh and nigher,

Until the lengthening wings break into fire

At either curved point,—what bitter wrong

Can the earth do to us, that we should not long

Be here contented? Think. In mounting higher,
The angels would press on us, and

aspire
To drop some golden orb of perfect

song
Into our deep, dear silence. Let us

Into our deep, dear silence. Let us stay

Rather on earth, Beloved,—where the unfit

Contrarious moods of men recoil away

And isolate pure spirits, and permit A place to stand and love in for a day, With darkness and the death-hour rounding it.

XXII

Is it indeed so? If I lay here dead, Wouldst thou miss any life in losing mine,

And would the sun for thee more coldly shine,

Because of grave-damps falling round my head?

I marvelled, my Beloved, when I read

Thy thought so in the letter. I am thine—

But . . . so much to thee? Can I pour thy wine

While my hands tremble? Then my soul, instead

Of dreams of death, resumes life's lower range!

Then, love me, Love! look on me... breathe on me!

As brighter ladies do not count it strange,

For love, to give up acres and degree, I yield the grave for thy sake, and exchange

My near sweet view of Heaven, for earth with thee!

XXIV

Let the world's sharpness like a clasping knife

Shut in upon itself and do no harm In this close hand of Love, now soft and warm.

And let us hear no sound of human strife

After the click of the shutting.

Life to life—

I lean upon thee, Dear, without alarm,

And feel as safe as guarded by a charm,

Against the stab of worldlings who if rife,

Are weak to injure. Very whitely still

The lilies of our lives may reassure Their blossoms from their roots! accessible

Alone to heavenly dews that drop not fewer;

Growing straight, out of man's reach, on the hill.

God only, Who made us rich, can make us poor.

XXV

A heavy heart, Beloved, have I borne From year to year until I saw thy face,

And sorrow after sorrow took the place

Of all those natural joys as lightly worn

As the stringed pearls . . . each lifted in its turn

By a beating heart at dance-time. Hopes apace

Were changed to long despairs, . . . till God's own grace

Could scarcely lift above the world I find thee: I am safe, and strong, forlorn

My heavy heart. Then thou didst bid me bring

And let it drop adown thy calmly Looks backward on the tedious time great

Deep being! Fast it sinketh, as a thing

Which its own nature doth precipi-

While time doth close above it, mediating

Betwixt the stars and the unaccomplished fate.

I lived with visions for my company Instead of men and women, years ago, . And found them gentle mates, nor thought to know

A sweeter music than they played to

But soon their trailing purple was not free

Of this world's dust,—their lutes did silent grow,

And I myself grew faint and blind

below Their vanishing eyes. Then thou

didst come . . . to be, Beloved, what they seemed. Their shining fronts,

Their songs, their splendours . . . (better, yet the same, . . .

As river-water hallowed into fonts ...) Met in thee, and from out thee overcame

My soul with satisfaction of all wants-

Because God's gifts put man's best dreams to shame.

My own Belovêd, who hast lifted me From this drear flat of earth where I was thrown,

And in betwixt the languid ringlets, blown

A life-breath, till the forehead hope-

Shines out again, as all the angels see. Before thy saving kiss! My own, my own,

Who camest to me when the world was gone.

And I who looked for only God, found Who art dearer, better! Rather thee 1

and glad.

As one who stands in dewless asphodel

he had

In the upper life . . . so I, with bosom-swell.

Make witness, here between the good and bad.

That Love, as strong as Death, retrieves as well.

XXVIII

My letters! all dead paper, . . . mute and white! -

And yet they seem alive and quivering Against my tremulous hands which loose the string

And let them drop down on my knee to-night.

This said . . . he wished to have me in his sight

Once, as a friend: this fixed a cay in spring

To come and touch my hand . . . a simple thing,

Yet I wept for it!—this . . . the paper's light . . . Said, Dear, I love thee: and I sank

and quailed As if God's future thundered on my

past: This said, I am thine—and so its

ink has paled With lying at my heart that beat too

fast: And this . . . O Love, thy words have ill availed,

If, what this said, I dared repeat at last!

I think of thee !-my thoughts do twine and bud

About thee, as wild vines about a tree

Put out broad leaves, and soon there's nought to see

Except the straggling green which hides the wood.

Yet, O my palm-tree, be it understood

I will not have my thoughts instead of thee

instantly

Rustle thy boughs and set thy By a mutual presence. Ah, keep near

trunk all bare.

And let these bands of greenery which insphere thee,

Drop heavily down, . . . burst, shattered, everywhere!

Because, in this deep joy to see and hear thee,

And breathe within thy shadow a new

I do not think of thee—I am too near thee.

I see thine image through my tears to-night,

And yet to-day I saw thee smiling. How

Refer the cause ?—Beloved, is it thou Or I? Who makes me sad? The acolyte

Amid the chanted joy and thankful

May so fall flat, with pale insensate

brow. On the altar-stair. I hear thy voice and vow

Perplexed, uncertain, since thou'rt out of sight,

As he, in his swooning ears, the choir's Amen!

Beloved, dost thou love? or did I see all

The glory as I dreamed, and fainted when

Too vehement light dilated my ideal For my soul's eyes? Will that light come again,

As now these tears come . . . falling hot and real?

Thou comest! all is said without a word.

I sit beneath thy looks, as children do In the noon-sun, with souls that tremble through

Their happy eyelids from an unaverred

Yet prodigal inward joy. Behold, I erred

In that last doubt ! and yet I cannot

The sin most, but the occasion . . . that we two

Renew thy presence! As a strong Should for a moment stand unmin-

and close, Thou dovelike help! and, when my

fears would rise, With thy broad heart serenely inter-

pose! Brood down with thy divine suffi-

ciencies These thoughts which tremble when

bereft of those, Like callow birds left_desert to the

> skies. XXXII

The first time that the sun rose on thine oath

To love me, I looked forward to the moon

To slacken all those bonds which seemed too soon

And quickly tied to make a lasting troth.

Quick-loving hearts, I thought, may quickly loathe; And, looking on myself, I seemed not

one

For such man's love!—more like an out of tune

Worn viol, a good singer would be wroth To spoil his song with, and which,

snatched in haste, Is laid down at the first ill-sounding

note. I did not wrong myself so, but I

placed For perfect wrong on thee. strains may float

'Neath master-hands, from instruments defaced,-

And great souls, at one stroke, may do and dote.

IIIXXX

Yes, call me by my pet-name! let me hear

The name I used to run at, when a child, From innocent play, and leave the

cowslips piled, To glance up in some face that proved me dear

With the look of its eyes. I miss the clear

Fond voices, which, being drawn and reconciled

Into the music of Heaven's undefiled, Call me no longer. Silence on the bier.

While I call God . . . call God !— So let thy mouth

Be heir to those who are now exanimate:

Gather the north flowers to complete the south,

And catch the early love up in the late!

Yes, call me by that name,—and I, in truth,

With the same heart, will answer, and not wait.

XXXIV

With the same heart, I said, I'll answer thee

As those, when thou shalt call me by my name—

Lo, the vain promise! Is the same, the same,

Perplexed and ruffled by life's strategy?

When called before, I told how hastily I dropped my flowers, or brake off from a game,

To run and answer with a smile that came

At play last moment and went on with me

Through my obedience. When answer now,

I drop a grave thought,—break from solitude —

Yet still my heart goes to thee . . . ponder how . . .

Not as to a single good but all my good!

Lay thy hand on it, best one, and allow

That no child's foot could run fast as this blood.

XXXV

If I leave all for thee, wilt thou exchange

And be all to me? Shall I never miss
Home-talk and blessing and the

common kiss
That comes to each in turn, nor count it strange,

When I look up, to drop on a new range

Of walls and floors . . . another home than this?

Nay, wilt thou fill that place by me which is

Filled by dead eyes too tender to know change?

That's hardest! If to conquer love has tried,

To conquer grief tries more . . . as all things prove;

For grief indeed is love and grief beside.

Alas! I have grieved so I am hard to love—

Yet love me—wilt thou? Open thine heart wide,

And fold within the wet wings of thy dove.

XXXVI

When we met first and loved, I did not build

Upon the event with marble. Could it mean

To last, a love set pendulous between Sorrow and sorrow? Nay, I rather thrilled,

Distrusting every light that seemed to gild

The onward path, and feared to overlean

A finger even. And, though I have grown serene

And strong since then, I think that God has willed A still renewable fear . . . O love,

O troth . . .

Lest these enclasped hands should

never hold, This mutual kiss drop down between

us both

As an unowned thing, once the lips
being cold.

And Love be false! if he, to keep one oath,

Must lose one joy by his life's star foretold.

XXXVII

Pardon, oh, pardon, that my soul should make

Of all that strong divineness which I know

For thine and thee, an image only so Formed of the sand, and fit to shift and break.

It is that distant years which did not take

Thy sovranty, recoiling with a blow,

Have forced my swimming brain to undergo

Their doubt and dread, and blindly to forsake

Thy purity of likeness, and distort
Thy worthiest love with worthless
counterfeit.

As if a shipwrecked Pagan, safe in port,

His guardiansea-god to commemorate, Should set a sculptured porpoise, gills, a-snort,

And vibrant tail, within the templegate.

XXXVIII

First time he kissed me, he but only kissed

The fingers of this hand wherewith I write,

And ever since it grew more clean and white, . . .

Slow to world-greetings . . . quick with its "Oh, list,"

When the angels speak. A ring of amethyst

I could not wear here plainer to my sight,

Than that first kiss. The second passed in height

The first, and sought the forehead, and half missed,

Half falling on the hair. O beyond meed!

That was the chrism of love, which love's own crown,

With sanctifying sweetness, did precede.

The third upon my lips was folded down

In perfect, purple state! since when, indeed,

I have been proud and said, "My Love, my own."

XXXXX

Because thou hast the power and own'st the grace

To look through and behind this mask of me,

(Against which, years have beat thus blanchingly With their rains!) and behold my

soul's true face,

The dim and weary witness of life's race,—

Because thou hast the faith and love to see,

Through that same soul's distracting lethargy,

The patient angel waiting for his place

In the new Heavens,—because nor sin nor woe,

Nor God's infliction, nor death's neighbourhood,

Nor all which others viewing, turn to go, . . .

Nor all which makes me tired of all, self-viewed, ...

Nothing repels thee, . . . Dearest, teach me so

To pour out gratitude, as thou dost, good!

XL

Oh yes! they love through all this world of ours!

I will not gainsay love, called love forsooth.

I have heard love talked in my early youth,

And since, not so long back but that the flowers

Then gathered, smell still. Mussulmans and Giaours Throw kerchiefs at a smile, and have

no ruth
For any weeping. Polypheme's white

tooth
Slips on the nut, if after frequent

showers
The shell is over-smooth,—and not so

much
Will turn the thing called love, aside

to hate, Or else to oblivion. But thou art not

such
A lover, my Beloved! thou canst wait

Through sorrow and sickness, to bring souls to touch, And think it soon when others cry,

And think it soon when others cry
"Too late."

XLI

I thank all who have loved me in their hearts, With thanks and love from mine.

Deep thanks to all

Who paused a little near the prisonwall,

To hear my music in its louder parts, Ere they went onward, each one to the mart's

Or temple's occupation, beyond call.

But thou, who in my voice's sink and And which on warm and cold days

Art's

Own instrument didst drop down at thy foot,

To hearken what I said between my tears. . . .

Instruct me how to thank thee !-Oh, to shoot

My soul's full meaning into future

That they should lend it utterance, and salute

Love that endures, with Life that disappears!

XLII

How do I love thee? Let me count the wavs.

I love thee to the depth and breadth and height

My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight

For the ends of Being and Ideal Grace.

I love thee to the level of every day's Most quiet need, by sun and candle-

I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;

I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise;

I love thee with the passion put to use In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith:

I love thee with a love I seemed to lose

With my lost saints,—I love thee with the breath,

Smiles, tears, of all my life!—and, if God choose, I shall but love thee better after

death.

Beloved, thou hast brought me many flowers Plucked in the garden, all the summer

through

And winter, and it seemed as if they

In this close room nor missed the sun and showers.

So, in the like name of that love of ours.

Take back these thoughts which here unfolded too,

I withdrew

When the sob took it, thy divinest From my heart's ground. Indeed, those beds and bowers

Be overgrown with bitter weeds and

And wait thy weeding; yet here's eglantine,

Here's ivy !—take them, as I used to do Thy flowers, and keep them where they shall not pine;

Instruct thine eyes to keep their colours true,

And tell thy soul, their roots are left in mine.

CASA GUIDI WINDOWS

(1851)

This Poem contains the impressions of the writer upon events in Tuscany of which she was a witness. "From a window," the critic may demur. She bows to the objection in the very title of her work. No continuous narrative, nor exposition of political philosophy, is attempted by her. It is a simple story of personal impressions, whose only value is in the intensity with which they were received, as proving her warm affection for a beautiful and unfortunate country; and the sincerity with which they are related, as indicating her own good faith and freedom from all partisanship.

Of the two parts of this Poem, the first was written nearly three years ago, while the second resumes the actual situation of 1851. The discrepancy between the two parts is a sufficient guarantee to the public of the truthfulness of the writer, who, though she certainly escaped the epidemic "falling sickness" of enthusiasm for Pio Nono, takes shames upon herself that she believed, like a woman, some royal oaths, and lost sight of the probable consequences of some obvious popular defects. If the discrepancy should be painful to the reader, let him understand that to the writer it has been more so. But such discrepancy we are called upon to accept at every hour by the conditions of our nature . . . the discrepancy between aspiration and performance, between faith and disillusion, between hope and fact.

O trusted, broken prophecy. O richest fortune sourly crost,

Born for the future, to the future lost ! " Nay, not lost to the future in this case. The future of Italy shall not be disinherited.

FLORENCE, 1851.

PART I

I HEARD last night a little child go singing 'Neath Casa Guidi windows, by the

church.

" O bella libertà, O bella !" stringing The same words still on notes he went in search

So high for, you concluded the upspringing

Of such a nimble bird to sky from perch

Must leave the whole bush in a tremble green;

And that the heart of Italy must

While such a voice had leave to rise

'Twixt church and palace of a Florence street !-

A little child, too, who not long had

By mother's finger steadied on his feet;

And still "O bella libertà" he sang.

Then I thought, musing, of the innumerous Sweet songs which for this Italy

outrang

From older singers' lips, who sang not

Exultingly and purely, yet, with

Sheathed into music, touched the heart of us

So finely that the pity scarcely pained!

I thought how Filicaja led on others, Bewailers for their Italy enchained, And how they called her childless among mothers,

Widow of empires, ay, and scarce

refrained Cursing her beauty to her face, as

brothers Might a shamed sister,—" Had she been less fair

She were less wretched,"—how, evoking so

From congregated wrong and heaped despair

Of men and women writhing under And strikes up palace-walls on either blow.

Harrowed and hideous in their filthy lair.

A personating Image, wherein woe Was wrapt in beauty from offending much.

They called it Cybele, or Niobe,

Or laid it corpse-like on a bier for such, Where the whole world might drop

for Italy Those cadenced tears which burn

not where they touch,— " Juliet of nations, canst thou die as

And was the violet crown that

crowned thy head So over large, though new buds made

it rough, It slipped down and across thine

eyelids dead, O sweet, fair Juliet ?"-Of such songs

enough; Too many of such complaints! Be-

hold, instead, Void at Verona, Juliet's marble

trough! And void as that is, are all images

Men set between themselves and actual wrong,

To catch the weight of pity, meet the stress

Of conscience; though 'tis easier to gaze long On personations, masks, and effi-

gies. Than to see live weak creatures

crushed by strong.

For me who stand in Italy to-day, Where worthier poets stood and sang before. I kiss their footsteps, yet their

words gainsay: I can but muse in hope upon this

Of golden Arno, as it shoots away

Straight through the heart of Florence, 'neath the four

Bent bridges, seeming to strain off like bows,

And tremble, while the arrowy under-

Shoots on and cleaves the marble as it goes,

side.

And froths the cornice out in glittering rows,

With doors and windows quaintly multiplied.

And terrace-sweeps, and gazers upon all,

thrown out,

From any lattice there, the same would fall

Into the river underneath, no doubt,-It runs so close and fast 'twixt wall and wall.

How beautiful! The mountains from without

Listen in silence for the word said next.

(What word will men say?) here where Giotto planted

His campanile, like an unperplexed Ouestion to Heaven, concerning the things granted

To a great people, who, being greatly vexed

In act, in aspiration keep undaunted! (What word says God?) sculptor's "Night" and "Day,"

And "Dawn" and "Twilight," wait in marble scorn.

Like dogs couched on a dunghill, on the clay

From whence the Medicean stamp's outworn,-

The final putting off of all such

By all such hands, and freeing of the In Florence, and the world outside

his Florence.

That's Michel Angelo! his statues wait In the small chapel of the dim St. Lawrence!

"Day's" eyes are breaking bold and passionate

Over his shoulder, and will flash abhorrence On darkness, and with level looks

meet fate. When once loose from that marble

film of theirs: The "Night" has wild dreams in her

sleep; the "Dawn" Is haggard as the sleepless: "Twilight" wears

A sort of horror: as the veil withdrawn

'Twixt the artist's soul and works had left them heirs

Of the deep thoughts which would not quail nor fawn,

His angers and contempts, his hope and love:

By whom if flower or kerchief were For not without a meaning did he place

> Princely Urbino on the seat above With everlasting shadow on his face; While the slow dawns and twilights

disapprove

The ashes of his long-extinguished

Which never shall clog more the feet of men.

I do believe, divinest Angelo, That winter-hour, in Via Larga,

when Thou wert commanded to build up in

snow Some marvel of thine art, which straight again

Dissolved beneath the sun's Italian glow,

While thine eyes, still broad with the plastic passion,

Thawed, too, in drops of wounded manhood, . . since,

Mocking alike thine art and indignation.

Laughed at the palace-window the new prince, . .

" Aha! this genius needs for exaltation,

When all's said, and howe'er the proud may wince,

A little marble from our princely mines!"

I do believe that hour thou laughedst

For the whole world and for thy Florentines.

After those few tears-which were only few!

That as, beneath the sun, the grand white lines

Of thy snow-statue trembled and withdrew,-

The head, erect as love's, being palsied first.

The eyelids flattened, the full brow turned blank.—

When the right hand, upraised as if it cursed,

Dropped, a mere snowball, and the people sank

laughter burst

From the window,-Michel, then, thy soul could thank

God and the prince, for promise and presage,

And laugh the laugh back, I think, verily.

Thine eyes being purged by tears of righteous rage,

To read a wrong into a prophecy, And measure a true great man's heritage

Against a mere Grand-duke's posterity.

I think thy soul said then, "I do not need

A princedom and its quarries, after all; For if I write, paint, carve a word, indeed,

On book or board or dust, on floor or

The same is kept of God Who taketh heed

That not a letter of the meaning fall. Or ere it touch and teach His world's deep heart,

Outlasting, therefore, all your lordships, Sir!

So keep your stone, beseech you, for your part,

To cover up your grave-place and refer The proper titles! I live by my art!

The thought I threw into this snow shall stir

This gazing people when their gaze is done:

And the tradition of your act and mine

When all the snow is melted in the

Shall gather up, for unborn men, a

Of what is the true princedom! ay, and none

Shall laugh that day, except the drunk with wine.

Amen, great Angelo! the day is come:

And, if we laugh not on it, shall we weep?

Much more we shall not. Through the mournful hum

Their voices, though a louder Of poets sonneteering in their sleep 'Neath the pale olives, which droop, tickling some

On chin and forehead from a dream too deep.-

Through all that drowsy hum of voices smooth.

The hopeful bird mounts carolling from brake; The hopeful child, with leaps to

catch his growth,

Sings open-eyed for liberty's sweet

And I, who am a singer too, forsooth.

Prefer to sing with these who are awake,

With birds, with babes, with men who will not fear

The baptism of the holy morning dew.

And many of such wakers now are

Complete in their anointed manhood. Will greatly dare and greatlier per-

severe!) Than join those old thin voices with

my new, And sigh for Italy with some safe

Cooped up in music 'twixt an "oh"

and "ah",-Nay, hand in hand with that young

child, will I Rather go singing "Bella libertà." Than, with those poets, croon the

dead or cry " Se tu men bella fossi, Italia!"

"Less wretched if less fair," perhaps a truth

Is so far plain in this—that Italy, Long trammelled with the purple of her youth

Against her age's due activity, Sate still upon her graves, without

Of death, but also without energy And hope of life. "What's Italy?" men ask:

And others answer, "Virgil, Cicero, Catullus, Cæsar." And what more? to task

The memory closer-" Why, Boccaccio,

Dante, Petrarca,"—and if still the Until their proper breaths, in that flask

Appears to yield its wine by drops too slow,-

"Angelo, Raffael, Pergolese,"—all Whose strong hearts beat through stone, or charged, again,

Cloth-threads with fire of souls electrical.

Or broke up heaven for music. What more then"?

Why, then, no more. The chaplet's last beads fall

In naming the last saintship within

And, after that, none prayeth in the land.

Alas, this Italy has too long swept Heroic ashes up for hour-glass sand;

Of her own past, impassioned nympholept!

Consenting to be nailed by the To the same bay-tree under which she

stepped

A queen of old, and plucked a leafy branch:

And licensing the world too long, in-

To use her broad phylacteries to staunch

And stop her bloody lips, which took no heed How one quick breath would draw

an avalanche

Of living sons around her, to succeed, The vanished generations. Could she count

Those oil-eaters, with large, live, mobile mouths

Agape for macaroni, in the amount Of consecrated heroes of her south's Bright rosary? The pitcher at the fount,

The gift of gods, being broken,—why, one loathes

To let the ground-leaves of the place confer

A natural bowl. And thus, she chose to seem

No nation, but the poet's pen-

With alms from every land of song and dream;

While her own pipers sweetly piped of her.

extreme

Of sighing, split the reed on which they played!

Of which, no more: but never say " no more

To Italy! Her memories undismaved

Say rather "evermore"—her graves implore

Her future to be strong and not afraid-

Her very statues send their looks before!

We do not serve the dead—the past is past!

God lives, and lifts His glorious mornings up

Before the eyes of men, who wake at last, And put away the meats they used

to sup, And on the dry dust of the ground

outcast The dregs remaining of the ancient

And turn to wakeful prayer and

worthy act. The dead, upon their awful 'vantage

ground,-The sun not in their faces,—shall abstract

No more our strength : we will not be discrowned

Through treasuring their crowns, nor deign transact

A barter of the present, in a sound, For what was counted good in foregone days.

O Dead, ye shall no longer cling to us With your stiff hands of desiccating praise,

And hold us backward by the garment thus,

To stay and laud you in long virelays!

Still, no! we will not be oblivious

Of our own lives, because ye lived before,

Nor of our acts, because ye acted well,-

We thank you that ye first un= latched the doorWe will not make it inaccessible
By thankings in the doorway any
more

But w ll go onward to extinguish hell With our fresh souls, our younger

hope, and God's

Maturity of purpose. Soon shall we Be the dead too! and, that our periods

Of life may round themselves to memory,

As smoothly as on our graves the funeral-sods

We must look to it to excel as ye,

And bear our age as far, unlimited By the last sea-mark! so, to be invoked

By future generations, as the Dead.

VIII

'Tis true that when the dust of death has choked

A great man's voice, the common words he said Turn oracles,—the meanings which

he yoked

Like horses, draw like griffins!—
this is true

And acceptable. Also I desire,

When men make record, with the flowers they strew,

"Savonarola's soul went out in fire Upon our Grand-duke's piazza, and burned through

A moment first, or ere he did expire, The veil betwixt the right and wrong, and showed

How near God sate and judged the judges there,—"

Desire, upon the pavement overstrewed,

To cast my violets with as reverent care,

And prove that all the winters which have snowed Cannot snow out the scent. from

Cannot snow out the scent, from stones and air,

Of a sincere man's virtues. This was he,

Savonarola, who, while Peter sank With his whole boat-load, called courageously

"Wake Christ, wake Christ!"—who, having tried the tank

Of the church-waters used for baptistry Ere Luther lived to spill them, said they stank!

Who also, by a princely deathbed, cried

"Loose Florence, or God will not loose thy soul,"

While the Magnificent fell back and died

Beneath the star-looks, shooting from the cowl,

Which turned to wormwood bitterness the wide

Deep sea of his ambitions. It were foul

To grudge Savonarola and the rest Their violets! rather pay them quick and fresh!

The emphasis of death makes manifest

The eloquence of action in our flesh;
And men who, living, were but
dianly guessed,

When once free from their life's entangled mesh,

Show their full length in graves, or even indeed

Exaggerate their stature, in the flat, To noble admirations which ex-

Nobly, nor sin in such excess. For that

Is wise and righteous. We, who are the seed

Of buried creatures, if we turned and spate

Upon our antecedents, we were vile.
Bring violets rather! If these had
not walked

Their furlong, could we hope to walk our mile?

Therefore bring violets! Yet if we, self-baulked,

Stand still a-strewing violets all the while

These had as well not moved, ourselves not talked

Of these. So rise up with a cheerful smile,

And, having strewn the violets, reap

And, having reaped and garnered, bring the plough

And draw new furrows 'neath the healthy morn,

And plant the great Hereafter in this Now.

TX

Of old 'twas so. How step by step was worn,

As each man gained on each, securely !—how

Each by his own strength sought his own ideal,

The ultimate Perfection leaning bright

From out the sun and stars, to bless the leal

And earnest search of all for Fair and Right,

Through the dim forms, by earth accounted real!

Because old Jubal blew into delight The souls of men, with clear-piped melodies.

What if young Asaph were content at most

To draw from Jubal's grave, with listening eyes,

Traditionary music's floating ghost Into the grass-grown silence? were it wise?

Is it not wiser, Jubal's breath being lost,

That Miriam clashed her cymbals to surprise

The sun between her white arms flung apart,

With new, glad, golden sounds? that David's strings

O'erflowed his hand with music from his heart?

So harmony grows full from many springs,

And happy accident turns holy art.

v

Or enter, in your Florence wanderings, Santa Maria Novella church. You pass

The left stair, where, at plague-time, Macchiavel

Saw one with set fair face as in a glass,

Dressed out against the fear of death and hell.

Rustling her silks in pauses of the mass,

To keep the thought off how her husband fell,

When she left home, stark dead across her feet—

The stair leads up to what Orcagna gave

Of Dante's demons; but you, passing it,

Ascend the right stair of the farther nave,

To muse in a small chapel scarcely lit

By Cimabue's "Virgin". Bright and brave,

That picture was accounted, mark, of old!

A king stood bare before its sovran grace;

A reverent people shouted to behold

The picture, not the king; and even the place

Containing such a miracle, grew bold,

Named the Glad Borgo from that beauteous face,

Which thrilled the artist, after work, to think

That his ideal Mary-smile should stand

So very near him!—he, within the brink

Of all that glory, let in by h's hand With too divine a rashness! Yet none shrink

Who gaze here now—albeit the thing is planned

Sublimely in the thought's simplicity.

The Virgin, throned in empyreal

state,
Minds only the young babe upon

her knee; While, each side, angels bear the

royal weight,

Prostrated meekly, smiling tenderly
Obligion of their wings! the Child

Oblivion of their wings! the Child
thereat
Stretches its hand like God. If

Stretches its hand like God. If any should,

Because of some stiff draperies and loose joints,

Gaze scorn down from the heights of Raffaelhood,

On Cimabue's picture,—Heaven anoints

The head of no such critic, and his blood

The poet's curse strikes full on, and appoints

To ague and cold spasms for ever more.

A noble picture! worthy of the shout Wherewith along the streets the people bore

Its cherub faces, which the sun threw

Until they stooped and entered the church door!—

Yet rightly was young Giotto talked

Whom Cimabue found among the sheep,

And knew, as gods know gods, and carried home

To paint the things he painted, with a deep

And fuller insight, and so overcome His chapel-Virgin with a heavenlier sweep

Of light. For thus we mount into the sum

Of great things known or acted. I hold, too,

hold, too,
That Cimabue smiled upon the lad,
At the first stroke which passed

what he could do,—
Or else his Virgin's smile had never

Or else his Virgin's smile had never had

Such sweetness in't. All great men who foreknew

Their heirs in art, for art's sake have been glad,

And bent their old white heads as if uncrowned,

Fanatics of their pure ideals still,

Far more than of their laurels

which were found

With some less stalwart struggle of the will.

If old Margheritone trembled, swooned.

And died despairing at the open sill Of other men's achievements (who achieved.

By loving art beyond the master!) he Was old Margheritone and conceived

Never, at youngest and most ecstasy,
A Virgin like that dream of one,
which heaved

The death-sigh from his heart. If wistfully

Margheritone sickened at the smell Of Cimabue's laurel, let him go!— Strong Cimabue stood up very well In spite of Giotto's—and Angelico,
The artist-saint, kept smiling in his

The smile with which he welcomed the sweet slow

Inbreak of angels (whitening through the dim

That he might paint them!) while the sudden sense

Of Raffael's future was revealed to him

By force of his own fair works' competence.

The same blue waters where the dolphins swim
Suggest the Tritons. Through the

blue Immense,
Strike out all swimmers! cling not

Strike out all swimmers! cling not in the way

Of one another, so to sink; but learn
The strong man's impulse, catch
the fresh'ning spray

He throws up in his motions, and discern

By his clear, westering eye, the time of day.

O God, Thou hast set us worthy gifts to earn,

Beside Thy heaven and Thee! and when I say 'Tis worth while for the weakest man

alive To live and die,—there's room too,

I repeat, For all the strongest to live well, and

strive
Their own way, by their individual

heat,
Like a new bee-swarm leaving the old

Despite the wax which tempteth violet-sweet.

So let the living live, the dead retain Flowers on cold graves !—though honour's best supplied,

When we bring actions, to prove theirs not vain.

VI

Cold graves, we say? it shall be testified

That living men who throb in heart and train,

Without the dead, were colder. If we tried

To sink the past beneath our feet, be

The future would not stand. Precipitate

This old roof from the shrine—and. insecure,

The nesting swallows fly off, mate from mate.

Scant were the gardens, if the graves were fewer

And the green poplars grew no longer straight,

Whose tops not looked to Troy. Why, who would fight

For Athens, and not swear by Marathon?

Who would build temples, without tombs in sight? Who live, without some dead man's

benison?

Who seek truth, hope for good, or strive for right,

If, looking up, he saw not in the

Some angel of the martyrs, all day long

Standing and waiting! your last rhythms will need The earliest key-note. Could I sing

this song, If my dead masters had not taken

heed To help the heavens and earth to make me strong,

As the wind ever will find out some reed.

And touch it to such issues as belong To such a frail thing? Who denies the dead,

Libations from full cups? Unless we

To look back to the hills behind us spread,

The plains before us sadden and confuse: If orphaned, we are disinherited.

I would but turn these lachrymals to

Fill them with fresh oil from the

olive grove, To feed the new lamp fuller. Shall I

What made my heart beat with exulting love,

A few weeks back?

XIII

. . The day was such a day As Florence owes the sun. The sky above.

Its weight upon the mountains seemed to lay,

And palpitate in glory, like a dove Who has flown too fast, full-hearted. Take away

The image! for the heart of man beat higher

That day in Florence, flooding all

her streets And piazzas with a tumult and desire.

The people, with accumulated heats, And faces turned one way, as if one

Did draw and flush them, leaving their old beats.

Went upward to the palace Pitti wall.

To thank their Grand-duke, who, not quite of course,

Had graciously permitted, at their call.

The citizens to use their civic force To guard their civic homes. So, one and all,

The Tuscan cities streamed up to the source

Of this new good, at Florence; taking it

As good so far, presageful of more good,-The first torch of Italian freedom,

To toss in the next tiger's face who

should Approach too near them in a cruel fit,-

The first pulse of an even flow of blood, To prove the level of Italian veins Toward rights perceived and granted.

How we gazed From Casa Guidi windows, while,

in trains Of orderly procession—banners raised, And intermittent bursts of martial strains

Which died upon the shout, as if amazed

By gladness beyond music—they passed on!

The magistrates, with their insignia, passed;

And all the people shouted in the sun,

And all the thousand windows which Pienza's following with his silver stare: had cast

A ripple of silks, in blue and scarlet, down,

As if the houses overflowed at last, Seemed to grow larger with fair heads and eyes.

The lawyers passed; and still arose

the shout. And hands broke from the windows,

to surprise Those grave calm brows with bay-tree | Of lovers of her Italy, in ranks,

leaves thrown out. The priesthood passed: the friars,

with worldly-wise Keen, sidelong glances from their

beards, about

The street, to see who shouted! many a monk

Who takes a long rope in the waist. was there!

Whereat the popular exultation drunk

With indrawn "vivas," the whole sunny air,

While through the murmuring windows rose and sunk

A cloud of kerchiefed hands! "the church makes fair

Her welcome in the new Pope's name." Ensued

The black sign of the "martyrs!" name no name.

But count the graves in silence. Next, were viewed

The artists; next, the trades; and after came

The populace, with flag and rights as good:

And very loud the shout was for that same

Motto, "Il popolo," IL POPOLO,-The word meant dukedom, empire, majesty,

And kings in such an hour might read it so.

degree,

Deputed representatives a-row,

Of every separate state of Tuscany: Siena's she-wolf, bristling on the

the first flag, preceded Pisa's hare;

And Massa's lion floated calm in gold,

Arezzo's steed pranced clear from bridle-hold.-

And well might shout our Florence. greeting there

These, and more brethren! Last. the world had sent

The various children of her teeming flanks-

Greeks, English, French-as to some parliament

Each bearing its land's symbols reverent:

At which the stones seemed breaking into thanks

And rattling up to the sky, such sounds in proof

Arose! the very house-walls seemed to bend,

The very windows, up from door to roof,

Flashed out a rapture of bright heads... to mend,

With passionate looks, the gesture's whirling off

A hurricane of leaves! Three hours did end

While all these passed; and ever in the crowd.

Rude men, unconscious of the tears that kept

Their beards moist, shouted; and some laughed aloud,

And none asked any why they laughed and wept:

Friends kissed each other's cheeks. and foes long vowed.

Did it more warmly; two-months' babies leapt

Right upward in their mothers' arms, whose black,

Wide, glittering eyes looked elsewhere; lovers pressed

Each before either, neither glancing back:

And next, with banners, each in his And peasant maidens, smoothly 'tired and tressed.

> Forgot to finger on their throats the slack

Great pearl-strings; while old blind men would not rest,

But pattered with their staves and with their shoes

Still on the stones, and smiled as if they saw.

O Heaven! I think that day had noble use

Among God's days. So near stood Right and Law,

Both mutually forborn! Law would not bruise.

Nor Right deny; and each in reverent awe

Honoured the other. What if, ne'ertheless,

The sun did, that day, leave upon the vines No charta, and the liberal Duke's

excess

Did scarce exceed a Guelf's or Ghibelline's

In the specific actual righteousness Of what that day he granted; 1 still the signs

Are good, and full of promise, we must say,

When multitudes thank kings for granting prayers,

And kings concede their people's right to pray,

Both in the sunshine! Griefs are not despairs,

So uttered; nor can royal claims dismay,

When men, from humble homes and ducal chairs,

Hate wrong together. It was well to view

Those banners ruffled in a Grandduke's face.

-Inscribed, "Live freedom, union, and all true

Brave patriots who are aided by God's grace!"

Nor was it ill, when Leopoldo drew His little children to the window-place He stood in at the Pitti, to suggest

They, too, should govern as the people willed.

What a cry rose then! some, who

saw the best, Sware that his eyes filled up, and over-

filled
With good warm human tears,
which unrepressed

1 Since when the constitutional concessions have been complete in Tuscany, as all the world knows. The event breaks in upon the meditation, and is too fast for prophecy in these strange times.—E.B.B.

Ran down. I like his face: the fore-head's build

Has no capacious genius, yet perhaps

Sufficient comprehension,—mild and sad,

And careful nobly,—not with care that wraps

Self-loving hearts, to stifle and make mad,

But careful with the care that shuns a lapse

Of faith and duty,—studious not to add

A burden in the gathering of a gain. And so, "God save the Duke," I say with those

Who that day shouted it, and while dukes reign

May all wear, in the visible overflows Of spirit, such a look of careful pain!

Methinks God loves it better than repose.

XIV

And all the people who went up to let Their hearts out to that Duke, as has been told—

Where guess ye that the living people met,

Kept tryst, formed ranks, chose leaders, first unrolled

Their banners?
In the Loggia? where is set

Cellini's godlike "Perseus," bronze
—or gold—

(How name the metal, when the statue flings

Its soul so in your eyes?) with brow and sword

Superbly calm, as all opposing things Slain with the Gorgon, were no more abhorred

Since ended?

No! the people sought no wings From "Perseus" in the Loggia, nor implored

An inspiration in the place beside, From that dim bust of Brutus, jagged and grand,

Where Buonarotti passionately tried Out of the clenched marble to demand

The head of Rome's sublimest homicide,

from his hand.

Despairing he could find no model

found The gods and gladiators thick

enough? Not there! the people chose still

holier ground! The people, who are simple, blind,

and rough. Know their own angels, after looking round.

What chose they then? where met they?

xv

On the stone Call'd Dante's,—a plain flat stone, scarce discerned

From others in the pavement,whereupon

He used to bring his quiet chair out, turned.

To Brunelleschi's church, and pour alone

The lava of his spirit when it burned-

It is not cold to-day. O passionate Poor Dante, who, a banished Flor-

Didst sit austere at banquets of the great,

And muse upon this far-off stone of

thine. And think how oft the passers used to

A moment, in the golden day's decline.

With "good-night, dearest Dante!" -well, good-night!

I muse now, Dante, and think, verily,

Though chapelled in Ravenna's byeway, might

Thy buried bones be thrilled to ecstasy.

Couldst know thy favourite stone's elected right

As tryst-place for thy Tuscans to foresee Their earliest chartas from I good

night, good morn, Henceforward, Dante! now my soul is sure

Then dropt the quivering mallet That thine is better comforted of scorn.

> And looks down from the stars in fuller cure.

Of Brutus, in all Florence, where he Than when, in Santa Croce church, forlorn

Of any corpse, the architect and hewer

Did pile the empty marbles as thy tomb! For now thou art no longer exiled.

Best honoured !--we salute thee who art come

Back to the old stone with a softer

Than Giotto drew upon the wall, for

Good lovers of our age to track and plough Their way to, through Time's ordures

stratified. And startle broad awake into the

dull Bargello chamber. Now, thou'rt milder-eved,

And Beatrix may leap up glad to

Thy first smile, even in heaven and at her side.

Like that which, nine years old, looked beautiful Tuscan May-game. Foolish

words! I meant Only that Dante loved his Florence

well. And Florence, now, to love him is

content! I mean too, certes, that the sweetest smell

Of love's dear incense, by the living sent

To find the dead, is not accessible To your low livers! no narcotic,—

not Swung in a censer to a sleepy

tune,-But trod out in the morning air, by

hot Quick spirits, who tread firm to ends

foreshown, And use the name of greatness unfor-

To meditate what greatness may be

XVI

For Dante sits in heaven, and ye stand here,

And more remains for doing, all must feel.

Than trysting on his stone from year to year

To shift processions, civic heel to

The town's thanks to the Pitti. Are ye freer

For what was felt that day? A chariot wheel

May spin fast, yet the chariot never roll.

But if that day suggested something good,

And bettered, with one purpose, soul by soul,—

Better means freer. A land's brotherhood

Is most puissant! Men, upon the whole,

Are what they can be,—nations, what they would.

XVII

Will, therefore, to be strong, thou Italy!

Will to be noble! Austrian Metternich

Can fix no yoke unless the neck agree; And thine is like the lion's when the thick

Dews shudder from it, and no man would be The stroker of his mane, much less

would prick
His nostril with a reed. When

nations roar

Like lions, who shall tame them, and defraud

Of the due pasture by the river-shore? Roar, therefore! shake your dewlaps dry abroad.

The amphitheatre with open door Leads back upon the benches who applaud

The last spear-thruster!

XVIII

Yet the Heavens forbid That we should call on passion to confront

The brutal with the brutal, and, amid
This ripening world, suggest a lionhunt

And lion-vengeance for the wrongs men did

And do now, though the spears are getting blunt.

We only call, because the sight and proof

Of lion-strength hurts nothing; and to show

A lion-heart, and measure paw with hoof,

Helps something, even, and will instruct a foe

Well as the onslaught, how to stand aloof!

Or else the world gets past the mere brute blow

Given or taken. Children use the fist

Until they are of age to use the brain:

And so we needed Cæsars to assist Man's justice, and Napoleons to explain

God's counsel, when a point was nearly missed,

Until our generations should attain

Christ's stature nearer. Not that we, alas!

Attain already; but a single inch Will help to look down on the swordsman's pass,

As Roland on a coward who could flinch;

And, after chloroform and ether-gas, We find out slowly what the bee and finch

Have ready found, through Natures' lamp in each,—

How to our races we may justify Our individual claims, and, as we reach

Our own grapes, bend the top vines to supply

The children's uses: how to fill a breach

With olive branches; how to quench a lie

With truth, and smite a foe upon the cheek

With Christ's most conquering kiss! why, these are things

Worth a great nation's finding, to prove weak

The "glorious arms" of military kings!

And so with wide embrace, my England, seek

To stifle the bad heat and flicker-

Of this world's false and nearly expended fire!

Draw palpitating arrows to the wood,

And send abroad thy high hopes, and thy higher Resolves, from that most virtuous

Resolves, from that most virtuous altitude,

Till nations shall unconsciously aspire By looking up to thee, and learn that good

And glory are not different. Announce law

By freedom; exalt chivalry by peace;

Instruct how clear calm eyes can overawe,

And how pure hands, stretched simply to release

A bond-slave, will not need a sword to draw

To be held dreadful. O my England, crease

Thy purple with no alien agonies

Which reach thee through the net of war! No war! Disband thy captains, change thy

victories,

Be henceforth prosperous as the angels are—

Helping, not humbling.

VIV

Drums and battle cries
Go out in music of the morning

And soon we shall have thinkers in the place

Of fighters; each found able as a

man To strike electric influence through a

Unstayed by city-wall and barbican.

The poet shall look grander in the face
Than ever he looked of old, when
he began

To sing that " Achillean wrath which slew

So many heroes,"—seeing he shall treat

The deeds of souls heroic toward the true—

The oracles of life—previsions sweet And awful, like divine swans gliding through

White arms of Ledas, which will leave the heat

Of their escaping godship to endue

The human medium with a heavenly flush.

Meanwhile, in this same Italy we want Not popular passion, to arise and crush,

But popular conscience, which may covenant

For what it knows. Concede without a blush—

To grant the "civic guard" is not to

The civic spirit, living and awake. Those lappets on your shoulders, citizens,

Your eyes strain after sideways till they ache,

While still, in admirations and amens, The crowd comes up on festa-days, to take

The great sight in—are not intelligence,

Not courage even—alas, if not the sign
Of something very noble, they are

nought;
For every day ye dress your sallow

kine With fringes down their cheeks,

though unbesought
They loll their heavy heads and
drag the wine,

And bear the wooden yoke as they were taught

The first day. What ye want is light—indeed

Not sunlight—(ye may well look up surprised To those unfathomable heavens

that feed
Your purple hills!)—but God's light

organised
In some high soul, crowned capable

to lead
The conscious people,—conscious and

advised,—

For if we lift a people like mere clay,

It falls the same. We want thee, O unfound

And sovran teacher! if thy beard be grey

Or black, we bid thee rise up from the Eyes, of their own lids flashing them-

And speak the word God giveth thee to say,

Inspiring into all this people round. Instead of passion, thought, which pioneers

All generous passion, purifies from sin. And strikes the hour for. thou teacher! here's

A crowd to make a nation!-best

By making each a man, till all be

Of earth's true patriots and pure martyrs in

Knowing and daring. Best unbar the doors

Which Peter's heirs keep locked so overclose

floors,

While every churchman dangles as he

The great key at his girdle, and

In Christ's name, meekly. Open wide the house-

Concede the entrance with Christ's liberal mind.

And set the tables with His wine and bread.

What! commune in "both kinds?" In every kind-

Wine, wafer, love, hope, truth, unlimited.

Nothing kept back. For, when a man is blind

To starlight, will he see the rose is red? A bondsman shivering at a Tesuit's foot-

"Væ!mea culpa!" is not like to stand A freedman at a despot's, and dispute

His titles by the balance in his hand. Weighing them "suo jure." Tend the root,

If careful of the branches; and ex-

The inner souls of men, before you strive

For civic heroes.

But the teacher, where? From all these crowded faces, all alive,---B.P.

selves bare .-

And brows that with a mobile life contrive

A deeper shadow,—may we no wise dare

To point a finger out, and touch a

Rise And cry "this is the leader." What. all these !-

Broad heads, black eyes, -vet not a soul that ran

From God down with a message? All, to please

The donna waving measures with her fan.

And not the judgment-angel on his knees-

The trumpet just an inch off from his lips-

They only let the mice across the Who when he breathes next, will put out the sun?

Yet mankind's self were foundered in eclipse,

If lacking, with a great work to be done.

A doer. No, the earth already dips Back into light—a better day's begun-

And soon this doer, teacher, will stand plain,

And build the golden pipes and synthesize

This people-organ for a holy strain: And we who hope thus, still in all these eyes,

Go sounding for the deep look which shall drain

Suffused thought into channelled enterprise!

Where is the teacher? What now may he do,

Who shall do greatly? Doth he gird his waist

With a monk's rope, like Luther? or pursue

The goat, like Tell? or dry his nets in haste.

Like Masaniello when the sky was blue?

Keep house like any peasant, with inlaced,

Bare, brawny arms about his favourite child,

And meditative looks beyond the door?-

(But not to mark the kidling's teeth have filed

The green shoots of his vine which last year bore

Full twenty bunches;) or, on triplepiled 'brone-velvets, shall we see him

Throne-velvets, shall we see him bless the poor,

Like any Pontiff, in the Poorest's name,—

While the tiara holds itself aslope
Upon his steady brows, which, all
the same,

Bend mildly to permit the people's hope?

XXI

Whatever hand shall grasp this oriflamme,

Whatever man (last peasant or first Pope

Seeking to free his country!) shall appear,

Teach, lead, strike fire into the masses, fill

These empty bladders with fine air, insphere

These wills into a unity of will,

And make of Italy a nation—dear And blessed be that man! the Heavens shall kill

No leaf the earth shall grow for him: and Death

Shall cast him back upon the lap of Life.

To live more surely, in a clarion-breath

Of hero-music! Brutus, with the knife,

Rienzi, with the fasces, throb beneath

Rome's stones; and more, who threw away joy's fife

Like Pallas, that the beauty of their souls

Might ever shine untroubled and entire! But if it can be true that he who

rolls
The Church's thunders will reserve

her fire
The only light; from eucharistic
bowls

Will pour new life for nations that expire,

And rend the scarlet of his Papal vest

To gird the weak loins of his countrymen—

I hold that man surpasses all the rest
Of Romans, heroes, patriots,—and

that when

He sat down on the throne, he dispossessed

The first graves of some glory. See

again,

This country-saving is a glorious thing!
Why, say a common man achieved

it? Well!

Say, a rich man did? Excellent!

Say, a rich man did ? Excellent !

A king?

That grows sublime! A priest?
Improbable!

A Pope? Ah, there we stop and cannot bring
Our faith up to the leap, with history's

bell
So heavy round the neck of it—
albeit

We fain would grant the possibility For thy sake, Pio Nono!

YYII

Stretch thy feet
In that case—I will kiss them reverently

As any pilgrim to the Papal seat!

And, such proved possible, thy throne
to me

Shall seem as holy a place as Pellico's

Venetian dungeon; or as Spielberg's grate, Where the fair Lombard woman

hung the rose

Of her sweet soul, by its own dewy weight,

(Because her sun shone *inside* to the close!)

And pining so, died early, yet too late For what she suffered! Yea, I will not choose

Betwixt thy throne, Pope Pius, and the spot

Marked red for ever spite of rains and dews,

Where two fell riddled by the Austrian's shot—

The brothers Bandiera, who accuse, With one same mother-voice and face (that what They speak may be invincible), the

Of earth's tormentors before God, the Just,

Until the unconscious thunder-bolt begins

To loosen in His grasp.

XXIII

And yet we must Beware, and mark the natural kiths and kins

Of circumstance and office, and distrust

A rich man reasoning in a poor man's hut

A poet who neglects pure truth to prove

Statistic fact; a child who leaves a rut

For the smooth road; a priest who vows his glove

Exhales no grace; a prince who walks a-foot;

A woman who has sworn she will not love;

Ninth Pius sitting in Seventh Gregory's chair, With Andrea Doria's forehead!

XXIV

Count what goes
To making up a Pope, before he
wear

That triple crown. We pass the world-wide throes

Which went to make the Popedom,
—the despair

Of free men, good men, wise men; the dread shows

Of women's faces, by the faggot's flash.

Tossed out, to the minutest stir and throb

Of the white lips, least tremble of a lash,

To glut the red stare of the licensed mob!

The short mad cries down oubliettes,
—the plash
So horribly far off! priests trained

So horribly far off! priests, trained to rob;

And kings that, like encouraged nightmares, sate

On nations' hearts most heavily distressed With monstrous sights and apophthegms of fate.

We pass these things,—because "the times" are prest

With necessary charges of the weight

Of all the sin; and "Calvin, for the rest.

Made bold to burn Servetus—Ah, men err!"—

And, so do Churches ! which is all we mean

To bring to proof in any register

Of theological fat kine and lean— So drive them back into the pens!

refer

Old sins with long beards, and "I wis

Old sins with long beards, and "I wis and ween,"

Entirely to the times—the times—the times!

Nor ever ask why this preponderant, Infallible, pure Church could set her chimes

Most loudly then, just then; most jubilant,

Precisely then—when mankind stood in crimes

Full heart-deep, and Heaven's judgments were not scant.

Inquire still less, what signifies a Church

Of perfect inspiration and pure laws, Who burns the first man with a brimstone torch,

And grinds the second, bone by bone, because

The times, forsooth, are used to rack and scorch!

What is a holy Church, unless she awes The times down from their sins? Did Christ select

Such amiable times, to come and teach
Love to, and mercy? Why, the
world were wrecked

If every mere great man, who lives to reach

A little leaf of popular respect, Attained not simply by some special breach

In his land's customs,—by some precedence

In thought and act—which, having proved him higher

Than his own times, proved too his competence

Of helping them to wonder and aspire.

XXV

My words are guiltless of the bigot's sense!

My soul has fire to mingle with the

Of all these souls, within or out of doors

Of Rome's Church or another. I believe In one priest, and one temple, with

its floors Of shining jasper, gloom'd at morn

Of shining jasper, gloom'd at morn and eve

By countless knees of earnest

auditors;
And crystal walls, too lucid to per-

ceive,—

That none may take the measure

of the place And say, "so far the porphyry;

then, the flint—

To this mark, mercy goes, and there, ends grace,"

While still the permeable crystals hint At some white starry distance, bathed in space!

I feel how nature's ice-crusts keep the dint

Of undersprings of silent Deity; I hold the articulated gospels, which Show Christ among us, crucified on tree:

I love all who love truth, if poor or rich

In what they have won of truth possessively!

No altars and no hands defiled with pitch

Shall scare me off, but I will pray and eat

With all these—taking leave to choose my ewers

And say at last, "Your visible Churches cheat

Their inward types; and if a Church assures
Of standing without failure and de-

feat,
That Church both fails and lies!"

nat Church both fails and if

XXVI

To leave which lures
Of wider subject through past
years,—behold,

We come back from the Popedom to the Pope, To ponder what he must be, ere we are bold

For what he may be, with our heavy hope
To trust upon his soul. So, fold by

fold, Explore this mummy in the priestly

cope Transmitted through the darks of

time, to catch
The man within the wrappage, and
discern

How he, an honest man, upon the watch Full fifty years, for what a man may

Full fifty years, for what a man may learn,

Contrived to get just there: with

Contrived to get just there; with what a snatch

Of old world oboli he had to earn
The passage through: with wh

The passage through; with what a drowsy sop To drench the busy barkings of his

brain;
What ghosts of pale tradition,

wreathed with hop 'Gainst wakeful thought, he had to

entertain
For heavenly visions; and consent to stop

The clock at noon, and let the hour remain

(Without vain windings up) inviolate,

Against all chimings from the belfry.

Lo!

From every given pope, you must abate,
Albeit you love him, some things—

good, you know—

Which every given heretic you hate Claims for his own, as being plainly

so.

A pope must hold by popes a little,

—yes,
By councils,—from Nicæa up to

Trent,—
By hierocratic empire, more or

Irresponsible to men,—he must resent

Each man's particular conscience, and repress

Inquiry, meditation, argument, As tyrants faction. Also, he must

As tyrants faction. Also, he m not Love truth too dangerously, but prefer "The interests of the Church,"

because a blot

Is better than a rent in miniver,—
Submit to see the people swallow

Husk-porridge which his chartered churchmen stir Quoting the only true God's

epigraph,

"Feed my lambs, Peter!"—must

Attesting with his pastoral ring and staff,

To such a picture of our Lady, hit
Off well by artist angels, though
not half

As fair as Giotto would have painted it;

To such a vial, where a dead man's blood
Runs yearly warm beneath a church-

man's finger;

To such a holy house of stone and

wood,
Whereof a cloud of angels was the

bringer
From Bethlehem to Loreto!—

Were it good

For any pope on earth to be a flinger Of stones against these highniched counterfeits?

Apostates only are iconoclasts.

He dares not say, while this false thing abets

That true thing, "this is false!" he keepeth fasts And prayers, as prayers and fasts

were silver frets
To change a note upon a string that

lasts,
And make a lie a virtue. Now,

if he Did more than this,—higher hoped

and braver dared,—
I think he were a pope in jeopardy,
Or no pope rather! for his soul had

barred
The vaulting of his life. And certainly,

If he do only this, mankind's regard Moves on from him at once, to seek some new

Teacher and leader! He is good and great

According to the deeds a pope can do;

Most liberal, save those bonds; affectionate,

As princes may be; and, as priests are, true—

But only the ninth Pius after eight, When all's praised most. At best and hopefullest,

He's pope—we want a man! his heart beats warm,

But, like the prince enchanted to the waist,

He sits in stone, and hardens by a charm

Into the marble of his throne highplaced!

Mild benediction, waves his saintly arm—

So good! but what we want's a perfect man,

Complete and all alive: half travertine

Half suits our need, and ill subserves our plan.

Feet, knees, nerves, sinews, energies divine

Were never yet too much for men who ran

In such exalted ways as this of thine, Deliverer whom we seek, whoe'er thou art,

Pope, prince, or peasant! If, indeed, the first,

The noblest, therefore! since the heroic heart

Within thee must be great enough to burst

Those trammels buckling to the baser part

Thy saintly peers in Rome, who crossed and cursed

With the same finger.

XXVII

Come, appear, be found, If pope or peasant, come! we hear the cock,

The courtier of the mountains when first crowned

With golden dawn; and orient glories flock

To meet the sun upon the highest ground.

Take voice and work! we wait to hear thee knock

At some one of our Florentine nine gates,

On each of which was imaged a And shut the mouth of hell below the sublime

Face of a Tuscan genius, which, for hate's

in her prime Turned boldly on all comers to her

states,

As heroes turned their shields in antique time, Blazoned with honourable acts.

And though

The gates are blank now of such images.

Nicolo Toward dear Arezzo, 'twixt the

acacia trees, Nor Dante, from gate Gallo-still

we know.

Despite the razing of the blazonries, Remains the consecration of the shield .-

The dead heroic faces will start out On all these gates, if foes should

take the field.

shout.

With our live fighters, who will scorn to yield

round about, They find in what a glorious com-

pany They fight the foes of Florence! If these Italian hands had planted Who will grudge

His one poor life, when that great man we see,

Has given five hundred years, the Nor hear appeals from Buonarotti's world being judge,

To help the glory of his Italy? Who, born the fair side of the Alps, will budge,

When Dante stays, when Ariosto stays, When Petrarch stays, for ever? Ye

bring swords My Tuscans? Why, if wanted in

this haze. Bring swords, but first bring souls !-

bring thoughts and words Unrusted by a tear of yesterday's,

Yet awful by its wrong, and cut these cords

And mow this green lush falseness to the roots,

swathe!

And if ye can bring songs too, let the lute's

And love's sake both, our Florence Recoverable music softly bathe

Some poet's hand, that, through all bursts and bruits

Of popular passion—all unripe and rathe

Convictions of the popular intellect-

Ye may not lack a finger up the air. Annunciative, reproving, pure, erect,

And Petrarch looks no more from To show which way your first Ideal

The whiteness of its wings, when, sorely pecked

By falcons on your wrists, it unaware Arose up overhead, and out of sight.

XXVIII

Meanwhile, let all the far ends of the world

Breathe back the deep breath of their old delight,

And blend sublimely, at the earliest To swell the Italian banner just unfurled.

Help, lands of Europe! for, if Austria fight,

A hair's-breadth ev'n, when, gazing The drums will bar your slumber. Who had curled

The laurel for your thousand artists' brows,

none?

And who can sit down idle in the house,

And Raffael's canvas, rousing and

to rouse? Where's Poussin's master? Gallic

Avignon Bred Laura, and Vaucluse's fount

has stirred The heart of France too strongly,-

as it lets

Its little stream out, like a wizard's

Which bounds upon its emerald wings, and wets The rocks on each side—that she

should not gird

Her loins with Charlemagne's sword, when foes beset

The country of her Petrarch. Spain may well

Be minded how from Italy she caught. To mingle with her tinkling Moorish bell.

A fuller cadence and a subtler thought: And even the New World, the receptacle

Of freemen, may send glad men, as it ought,

To greet Vespucci Amerigo's door: While England claims, by trump of poetry,

Verona, Venice, the Ravenna shore, And dearer holds her Milton's Fiesole Than Malvern with a sunset running o'er.

XXIX

And Vallombrosa, we two went to see Last June, beloved companion,where sublime

The mountains live in holy families, And the slow pinewoods ever He sang of Adam's Paradise and climb and climb

Half up their breasts; just stagger as they seize

it many a time,

And straggle blindly down the precipice!

The Vallombrosan brooks were strewn as thick

That June-day, knee-deep, with dead beechen leaves.

As Milton saw them ere his heart grew sick,

And his eyes blind. I think the monks and beeves Are all the same too: scarce they

have changed the wick On good St. Gualbert's altar, which

receives The convent's pilgrims; and the

pool in front Wherein the hill-stream trout are

cast, to wait The beatific vision, and the grunt

Used at refectory, keeps its weedy state. To baffle saintly abbots, who

would count The fish across their breviary, nor To climb the Alpine passes and look 'bate

The measure of their steps. waterfalls

And forests! sound and silence! mountains bare.

That leap up peak by peak, and catch the palls

Of purple and silver mist, to rend and share

With one another, at electric calls Of life in the sunbeams,—till we cannot dare

Fix your shapes, learn your number! we must think

Your beauty and your glory helped

The cup of Milton's soul so to the brink.

That he no more was thirsty when God's will

Had shattered to his sense the last chain-link

By which he drew from Nature's visible

The fresh well-water. Satisfied by this.

smiled. Remembering Vallombrosa. There-

fore is Some grey crag—drop back with The place divine to English man and

> child-We all love Italy.

Our Italy's

The darling of the earth—the treasury, piled

With reveries of gentle ladies, flung Aside, like ravelled silk, from life's worn stuff-

With coins of scholars' fancy, which, being rung

On work-day counter, still sound silver-proof-

In short, with all the dreams of dreamers young,

Before their heads have time for slipping off

Hope's pillow to the ground. How oft, indeed,

We all have sent our souls out from the north.

On bare white feet which would not print nor bleed.

forth,

Where the low murmuring Lombard rivers lead

The sight which thou and I see afterward

awake. When standing on the actual,

blessed sward Where Galileo stood at nights to

The vision of the stars, we find it

Gazing upon the earth and heaven, to make

A choice of beauty. Therefore let us all

In England, or in any other land Refreshed once by the fountain-

rise and fall Of dreams of this fair south,—who

understand A little how the Tuscan musical

Vowels do round themselves, as if they plann'd

Eternities of separate sweetness,-

Or ere in wine-cup we pledged faith or glee-

Who loved Rome's wolf, with demigods at suck.

Or ere we loved truth's own divinity,-

Who loved, in brief, the classic hill and brook.

And Ovid's dreaming tales, and Petrarch's song.

Or ere we loved Love's self !-why, let us give

The blessing of our souls, and wish them strong

To bear it to the height where prayers arrive,

When faithful spirits pray against a wrong;

To this great cause of southern men, who strive

In God's name for man's rights, and shall not fail!

Behold, they shall not fail. The Couldst thou not watch one hour? shouts ascend

Above the shricks, in Naples, and prevail.

Their bee-like way to gardens almost Rows of shot corpses, waiting for the end

Of burial, seem to smile up straight and pale

From Tuscan Bellosguardo, wide Into the azure air, and apprehend That final gun-flash from Paler-

mo's coast, Which lightens their apocalypse of

death. So let them die! The world shows nothing lost;

Therefore, not blood! Above or underneath,

What matter, brothers, if we keep our post

On truth's and duty's side? As sword to sheath,

Dust turns to grave, but souls find place in Heaven.

O friends, heroic daring is success, The eucharistic bread requires no leaven:

And though your ends were hopeless, we should bless

Your cause as holy! Strive-and. having striven,

Who loved Sorrento vines in picture- Take, for God's recompense, that righteousness!

PART II

I wrote a meditation and a dream, Hearing a little child sing in the street

I leant upon his music as a theme, Till it gave way beneath my heart's full beat.

Which tried at an exultant prophecy But dropped before the measure was complete-

Alas, for songs and hearts! O Tus-

O Dante's Florence, is the type too plain?

Didst thou, too, only sing of liberty,

As little children take up a high

With unintentioned voices, and break off

To sleep upon their mothers' knees again?

Then, sleep enough-

That sleep may hasten manhood, and sustain

The faint pale spirit with some muscular stuff.

II

But we, who cannot slumber as thou dost,

We thinkers, who have thought for thee and failed,—

We hopers, who have hoped for thee and lost,—

We poets, wandered round by dreams, who hailed

From this Atrides roof (with lintel-post

Which still drips blood,—the worse part hath prevailed)

The fire-voice of the beacons, to declare

Troy taken, sorrow ended,—cozened through

A crimson sunset in a misty air,— What now remains for such as we, to do?

—God's judgments, peradventure, will He bare

To the roots of thunder, if we kneel and sue?

III

From Casa Guidi windows I looked forth,

And saw ten thousand eyes of Florentines

Flash back the triumph of the Lombard north,—

Saw fifty banners, freighted with the signs

And exultations of the awakened earth.

Float on above the multitude in lines, Straight to the Pitti. So, the vision went,

And so, between those populous rough hands

Raised in the sun, Duke Leopold outleant.

And took the patriot's oath, which henceforth stands

Among the oaths of perjurers, eminent

To catch the lightnings ripened for these lands.

1 Referring to the well-known opening passage of the "Agamemnon" of Æschylus.

TV

Why swear at all, thou false Duke Leopold?

What need to swear? What need to boast thy blood

Taintless of Austria, and thy heart unsold

Away from Florence? It was understood

God made thee not too vigorous or too bold,

And men had patience with thy quiet mood,

And women, pity, as they saw thee pace

Their festive streets with premature

grey hairs:
We turned the mild dejection of

thy face
o princely meanings, took thy
wrinkling cares

For ruffling hopes, and called thee weak, not base.

Better to light the torches for more prayers

And smoke the pale Madonnas at the shrine.

Being still "our poor Grand-duke,"
"our good Grand-duke,"

"Who cannot help the Austrian in his line,"

Than write an oath upon a nation's book

For men to spit at with scorn's blurring brine!

Who dares forgive what none can overlook?

For me, I do repent me in this dust Of towns and temples, which makes Italy,—

I sigh amid the sighs which breathe a gust

Of dying century to century,

Around us on the uneven crater-

Of the old worlds,—I bow my soul and knee,

And sigh and do repent me of my fault

That ever I believed the man was

These sceptred strangers shun the common salt,

And, therefore, when the general board's in view,

They standing up to carve for blind and halt,

We should suspect the viands which ensue.

And I repent that in this time and place,

Where all the corpse-lights of experience burn

From Cæsar's and Lorenzo's festering race,

To illumine groping reasoners, I could learn

No better counsel for a simple case

Than to put faith in princes, in my turn.

Heavens! had the death-piles of the ancient years

Flared up in vain before me? Knew I not

What stench arises from their purple gears,—

And how the sceptres witness whence they got

Their briar-wood, crackling through the atmosphere's

Foul smoke, by princely perjuries, kept hot?

Forgive me, ghosts of patriots,— Brutus, thou,

Who trailest downhill into life again
Thy blood-weighed cloak, to indict
me with thy slow

Reproachful eyes !—for being taught in vain

That while the illegitimate Cæsars show

Of meaner stature than the first full strain,

(Confessed incompetent to conquer Gaul)

They swoon as feebly and cross
Rubicons
As rashly as any Julius of them all.

As rashly as any julius of them all. Forgive, that I forgot the mind that runs

Through absolute races, too unsceptical!

I saw the man among his little sons, His lips warm with their kisses while he swore.—

And I, because I am a woman, I,
Who felt my own child's coming
life before

The prescience of my soul, and held faith high,

I could not bear to think, whoever bore.

That lips, so warmed, could shape so cold a lie.

VT

From Casa Guidi windows I looked out,

Again looked, and beheld a different sight.

The Duke had fled before the people's shout

"Long live the Duke!" A people, to speak right,

Should speak as soft as courtiers, lest a doubt

Turn gracious sovereign brows to curdled white.

Moreover that same dangerous shouting meant

Some gratitude for future favours, which

Were only promised;—the Constituent

Implied;—the whole being subject to the hitch

In motu proprios, very incident To all these Czars, from Paul to Paulovitch.

Whereat the people rose up in the dust

Of the Duke's flying feet, and shouted still,

And loudly, only, this time, as was just,
Not "Live the Duke," who had fled,

for good or ill,

But "Live the People," who re-

mained and must,

The unrenounced and unrenounceable.

VII

Long live the people! How they lived! and boiled And bubbled in the cauldron of the

street!
How the young blustered, nor the

How the young blustered, nor the old recoiled,

And what a thunderous stir of tongues and feet

Trod flat the palpitating bells, and foiled

The joy-guns of their echo, shattering it!

How they pulled down the Duke's

arms everywhere!

How they set up new café-signs, to show

Where patriots might sip ices in pure air—

(Yet the fresh paint smelt somewhat).
To and fro

How marched the civic guard, and stopped to stare

When boys broke windows in a civic glow.

How rebel songs were sung to loyal tunes.

tunes, And the pope sursed, in ecclesiastic

metres!

How all the Circoli grew large as moons,

And all the speakers, moonstruck ! thankful greeters

Of prospects which struck poor the

ducal boons,
A mere free press, and chambers!—

frank repeaters
Of great Guerazzi's praises. . .
"There's a man

The father of the land !—who, truly great,

Takes off that national disgrace and ban,

The farthing tax upon our Florence-

And saves Italia as he only can."
How all the nobles fled, and would not

Because they were most noble! which being so,

How the mob vowed to burn their palaces,

Because they were too free to have leave to go.

How grown men raged at Austria's wickedness.

And smoked,—while fifty striplings in a row

Marched straight to Piedmont for the wrong's redress!

Who says we failed in duty, we who wore

Black velvet like Italian democrats, Who slashed our sleeves like patriots, nor forswore

The true republic in the form of hats?

We chased the Archbishop from the Duomo door—

We chalked the walls with bloody caveats

Against all tyrants. If we did not fight

Exactly, we fired muskets up the void, To show that victory was ours of right.

We met, discussed in every place, selfbuoyed

Except, perhaps, i' the chambers, day and night:

We proved that all the poor should be employed,

And yet the rich not worked for anywise,—

Pay certified, yet payers abrogated, Full work secured, yet liabilities To over-work excluded,—not one

bated
Of all our holidays, that still, at

twice Or thrice a-week, are moderately

rated.
We proved that Austria was dis-

lodged, or would Orshould be, and that Tuscany in arms Should, would, dislodge her, in high hardihood!

And yet, to leave our piazzas, shops, and farms,

For the bare sake of fighting, was not good.

We proved that also—" Did we carry charms

Against being killed ourselves, that we should rush

On killing others? What! desert herewith Our wives and mothers!—was that

duty? Tush!"
At which we shook the sword within

the sheath, Like heroes—only louder! and the

Ran up our cheek to meet the victor's wreath.

Nay, what we proved, we shouted how we shouted

(Especially the little boys did), planting

That tree of liberty whose fruit is doubted

Because the roots are not of nature's granting—

A tree of good and evil!—none, without it,

Grow gods !—alas, and, with it, men were wanting.

VIII

O holy knowledge, holy liberty, O holy rights of nations! If I speak against the

These bitter things jugglery

Of days that in your names proved blind and weak. It is that tears are bit When

we see

death in The brown skulls grin at churchyards bleak, rick is too

We do not cry, " This Yo light,"—

with that For death grows deathlier mouth he makes.

er things So with my mocking. Bitt I write.

r your Because my soul is bitter fo sakes.

O freedom ! O my Florence

İX

Men who might reaks Do greatly in a universe that by cfore And burns, must ever know by

they do.

Courage and patience are but seitcrifice; And sacrifice is offered for and an

Something conceived of. Each m

For what himself counts precioucts, whether true

Or false the appreciation it implies. At Here, was no knowledge, no concep tion, nought!

Desire was absent, that provides great,

From out the greatness of prevenient thought;

And action, action, like a flame that

A steady breath and fuel, being caught

Up, like a burning reed from other

Flashed in the empty and uncer-

Then wavered, then went out. hold, who blames Be-

A crooked course, when not a goal

To round the fervid striving of the

An ignorance of means may minis- Be

To greatness, but an ignorance of

Makes it impossible to be great at

So, with our Tuscans! Let none dare to sav.

Here virtue never can be national. Here fortitude can never cut its way Between the Austrian muskets, out

of thrall. I tell you rather, that whoever may Discern true ends here, shall grow

pure enough To love them, brave enough to strive for them.

And strong to reach them, though the roads be rough:

That having learnt—by no mere apophthegm—

Not the mere draping of a graceful

About a statue, broidered at the hem,—

Not the mere trilling on an opera stage.

Of " libertà " to bravos—(a fair word, Yet too allied to inarticulate rage And breathless sobs, for singing, though the chord

Were deeper than they struck it!) —but the gauge

Of civil wants sustained, and wrongs abhorred,-

The serious, sacred meaning and full use

Of freedom for a nation,-then, indeed,

Our Tuscans, underneath the bloody

Of a new morning, rising up agreed And bold, will want no Saxon souls or thews.

To sweep their piazzas clear of Austria's breed.

Alas, alas! it was not so this time. Conviction was not, courage failed, and truth

Was something to be doubted of. The mime

Changed masks, because a mime; the tide as smooth

In running in as out; no sense of crime

ecause no sense of virtue. Sudden ruth

Seized on the people . . . they would have again

Their good Grand-duke, and leave Guerazzi, though

He took that tax from Florence :-" Much in vain

He took it from the market-carts, we

While urgent that no market-men remain.

But all march off, and leave the spade and plough.

To die among the Lombards. Was

The dear paternal Duke did? the Duke!"

At which the joy-bells multitudin-

Swept by an opposite wind, as loudly shook.

Recall the mild Archbishop to his

To bless the people with his frightened

For he shall not be hanged yet, we intend.

Seize on Guerazzi: guard him in full

Or else we stab him in the back, to

Rub out those chalked devices! Set up new

Phrygian caps; and mend

The pavement of the piazzas broke into By the bare poles of freedom! Smooth the way

For the Duke's carriage, lest his highness sigh

"Here trees of liberty grew yesterdav."

Long live the Duke!—How roared the cannonry.

How rocked each campanile, and through a spray

Of nosegays, wreaths, and kerchiefs, tossed on high,

How marched the civic guard, the people still

Shouting—especially the little boys! Alas, poor people, of an unfledged

Most fitly expressed by such a callow voice!

Alas, still poorer Duke, incapable Of being worthy even of that noise!

You think he came back instantly, with thanks

And tears in his faint eyes, and hands extended

To stretch the franchise through their utmost ranks?

That having, like a father, apprehended.

He came to pardon fatherly those pranks

Played out, and now in filial service ended ?-

That some love token, like a prince, he threw.

To meet the people's love-call, in re-

Well, how he came I will relate to

And if your hearts should burn, why, hearts must burn.

To make the ashes which things old and new

Shall be washed clean in—as this Duke will learn.

From Casa Guidi windows, gazing

I saw and witness how the Duke came

The regular tramp of horse and tread of men

The Duke's arms; doff your Did smite the silence like an anvil

And sparkless. With her wide eyes at full strain. Our Tuscan nurse exclaimed, "Alack,

alack, Signora! these shall be the Austrians." "Nay,

Hush, hush," I answered, "do not wake the child!"

For so, my two-months' baby sleeping lay

In milky dreams upon the bed and smiled:

And I thought "he shall sleep on, while he may.

Through the world's baseness. Not being vet defiled.

Why should he be disturbed by what is done?"

Then, gazing, I beheld the long-drawn

Live out, from end to end, full in the sun.

With Austria's thousands. Sword and bayonet,
Horse, foot, artillery,—cannons

rolling on,

Like blind, slow storm-clouds gestant with the heat

Of undeveloped lightnings, each

bestrode

By a single man, dust-white from head to heel,

Indifferent as the dreadful thing he

Calm as a sculptured Fate, and terrible!

As some smooth river which hath overflowed,

Doth slow and silent down its current wheel

A loosened forest, all the pines erect,--

So, swept, in mute significance of storm,

The marshalled thousands,—itot an eye deflect

To left or right, to catch a nove form Of the famed city adorned by architect

And carver, nor of Beauties live and warm

Scared at the casements,—all, straightforward eyes

And faces, held as steadfast as their swords.

And cognisant of acts, not imageries. The key, O Tuscans, too well fits the wards!

Ye asked for mimes; these bring you tragedies—

For purple; these shall wear it as your lords.

Ye played like children: die like innocents!

Ye mimicked lightnings with a torch: the crack

of the actual bolt, your pastime, circumvents.

Ye called up ghosts, believing they were slack

To follow any voice from Gilboa's tents, . . .

Here's Samuel!—and, so, Granddukes come back!

xm

And yet, they are no prophets though they come.

That awful mantle they are drawing close,

Shall be searched, one day, by the shafts of Doom,

Through double folds now hoodwinking the brows.

Resuscitated monarchs disentomb Grave-reptiles with them, in their new life-throes:

Let such beware. Behold, the people waits,

Like God. As He, in His serene of might,

So they, in their endurance of long straits.

Ye stamp no nation out, though day and night

Ye tread them with that absolute heel which grates

And grinds them flat from all attempted height.

You kill worms sooner with a garden-spade

Than you kill peoples: peoples will not die;

The tail curls stronger when you lop the head;

They writhe at every wound and multiply,

And shudder into a heap of life that's made

Thus vital from God's own vitality.
'Tis hard to shrivel back a day of God's

Once fixed for judgment: 'tis as hard to change

The people's, when they rise beneath their loads

And heave them from their backs with violent wrench,

To crush the oppressor. For that judgment rod's

The measure of this popular revenge.

XIV

Meantime, from Casa Guidi windows we

Beheld the armament of Austria flow Into the drowning heart of Tuscany. And yet none wept, none cursed; or,

_if 'twas so, '

They wept and cursed in silence.
Silently

Our noisy Tuscans watched the invading foe;

They had learnt silence. Pressed against he wall

And grouped upon the church-steps opposite,

A few pale men and women stared

God knows what they were feeling, with their white

Constrained faces !- they, so pro-

Of cry and gesture when the world goes right,

Or wrong indeed. But here, was depth of wrong,

And here, still water: they were silent here:

And through that sentient silence, struck along

That measured tramp from which it stood out clear,

Distinct the sound and silence, like a gong

Tolled upon midnight,-each made awfuller:

While every soldier in his cap displayed

A leaf of olive. Dusty, bitter thing! Was such plucked at Novara, is it said?

A cry is up in England, which doth ring The hollow world through, that for ends of trade

And virtue, and God's better worshipping, We henceforth should exalt the

name of Peace, And leave those rusty wars that eat

the soul.—

(Besides their clippings at our golden fleece). I, too, have loved peace, and from

bole to bole Of immemorial, undeciduous trees.

Would write, as lovers use, upon a scroll

The holy name of Peace, and set it

Where none should pluck it down. On trees, I say,— Not upon gibbets !--With the

greenery Of dewy branches and the flowery

Sweet mediation 'twixt the earth and sky,

Providing, for the shepherd's holiday! Not upon gibbets !- though the vulture leaves

Some quiet to the bones he first picked bare.

Not upon d_{l} ingeons! though the wretch has grieves And groan it, hin, stirs not the outer

air

As mu 15 th, little field-mice stir the she ves_

Not upon sain-bolts! though the slave's respair

Has dulled his helpless, miserable brain, p

And left him blank beneath the freeman's whip,

To sing and laugh out idiocies of pain. Nor yet on starving homes! where

many a lip Has sobbed itself asleep through

curses vain!

I love no peace which is not fellowship. And which includes not mercy. I would have

Rather, the raking of the guns across The world, and shrieks against Heaven's architrave.

Rather, the struggle in the slippery fosse, Of dying men and horses, and the

wave Blood-bubbling. . . . Enough said!

-By Christ's own cross, And by the faint heart of my

womanhood, Such things are better than a Peace which sits

Beside the hearth in self-commended mood.

And takes no thought how wind and rain by fits

Are howling out of doors against the good

Of the poor wanderer. What! your peace admits

Of outside anguish while it sits at home?

I loathe to take its name upon my tongue-

It is no peace. 'Tis treason, stiff with doom,-

'Tis gagged despair, and inarticulate wrong, Annihilated Poland, stifled Rome. Dazed Naples, Hungary fainting 'neath the thong,

And Austria wearing a smooth olive-leaf

outpress The life from these Italian souls.

in brief.

O Lord of Peace, Whowart Lord of Righteousness,

Constrain the anguifhed worlds from sin and grief,

Pierce them with consc, nce, purge them with redress,

And give us peace which is no counterfeit!

But wherefore should we look out any

From Casa Guidi windov's? Shut them straight;

And let us sit down by the folged door And veil our saddened faces and so, wait

What next the judgment-neavens make ready for.

I have grown weary of these windows. Sights

Come thick enough and clear enough with thought,

Without the sunshine; souls have inner lights:

And since the Grand-duke has come back and brought

This army of the North which thus requites

His filial South, we leave him to be taught.

His South, too, has learnt something certainly,

Whereof the practice will bring profit

And peradventure other eyes may see,

From Casa Guidi windows, what is Or undone. Whatsoever deeds

they be, Pope Pius will be glorified in none.

Record that gain, Mazzini!-it shall top

Some heights of sorrow. Peter's rock, so named,

Shall lure no vessel, any more, to

Among the breakers. Peter's chair is shamed

Like any vulgar throne the nations

On her brute forehead, while her hoofs | To pieces for their firewood unreclaimed;

And, when it burns too, we shall see as well

In Italy as elsewhere. Let it burn. The cross, accounted still adorable.

Is Christ's cross only !--if the thief's would earn

Some stealthy genuflexions, we re-

And here the impenitent thief's has had its turn.

As God knows; and the people on their knees

Scoff and toss back the croziers, stretched like yokes

To press their heads down lower by degrees.

So Italy, by means of these last strokes.

Escapes the danger which preceded these.

Of leaving captured hands in cloven oaks . .

Of leaving very souls within the buckle

Whence bodies struggled outward . . . of supposing

That freemen may like bondsmen kneel and truckle.

And then stand up as usual, without losing

An inch of stature.

Those whom she-wolves suckle Will bite as wolves do, in the grappleclosing

Of adverse interests: this, at last, is known

(Thank Pius for the lesson) that albeit,

Among the Popedom's hundred heads of stone

Which blink down on you from the roof's retreat

In Siena's tiger-striped cathedral, -Joan

And Borgia 'mid their fellows you may greet,

A harlot and a devil, you will see Not a man, still less angel, grandly set With open soul, to render man

more free.

And if not thinking of the hook too.

debt:

But that's a rare case—so, by hook and crook

They take the advantage, agonizing Christ

By rustier nails than those of Cedron's brook,

I' the people's body very cheaply priced :

Quoting high priesthood out of Holv

And buying death-fields with the sacrificed.

Priests, priests !- there's no such name, -God's own, except

Ye take most vainly. Through Heaven's lifted gate

The priestly ephod in sole glory swept.

When Christ ascended, entered in, and

With victor face sublimely overwent.

At Deity's right hand, to mediate, He alone, He for ever. On His

breast The Urim and the Thummim, fed with

fire From the full Godhead. flicker with the unrest

Of human, pitiful heartbeats. Come up higher,

All Christians! Levi's tribe is dispossest!

That solitary alb ye shall admire. But not cast lots for. The last chrism, poured right,

Was on that Head, and poured for

And not for domination in men's sight.

What are these churches? The old temple wall

Doth overlook them juggling with | Set down thy people's faults :-- set the sleight

Of surplice, candlestick, and altarpall.

East church and West church, ay, North church and South.

The fishers are still thinking of the Rome's church and England's.-let them all repent.

And make concordats 'twixt their soul and mouth

Are counted somewhat deeply in their Succeed St. Paul by working at the tent.

Become infallible guides by speaking truth i

And excomminicate their own pride that benna

And cramp-d the sais of men. Thy, even here. Priestcraft | out; the twined

linen blfizes. Not, likethsbestos, to grow white

and clear.

But all to perish !-while the firesmell raises

To life some swooning spirits who. last year,

Lost breath and heart in these churchstifled places.

Why, almost, through this Pius, we believed

The priesthood could be an honest thing, he smiled

So saintly while our corn was being sheaved

For his own granaries. Showing now defiled His hireling hands, a better help's

achieved Than if he blessed us shepherd-like

and mild. False doctrine, strangled by its own

amen.

Dies in the throat of all this nation.

Will speak a pope's name, as they rise again?

What woman or what child will count him true?

What dreamer praise him with the voice or pen?

What man fight for him?—Pius has his due.

Record that gain, Mazzini!-Yes, but first

down the want

Of soul-conviction; set down aims dispersed.

And incoherent means, and valour scant

Because of scanty faith, and schisms accursed

That wrench these brother-hearts from covenant

With freedom and each other. Set down this

And this, and see to overcome it when The seasons bring the fruits thou wilt not miss

If wary. Let no cry of patriot men Distract thee fro the stern analysis

Of masses who cry on': keep thy

Clear as thy soul is virthous. Heroes'

Splashed up against thy noble brow in Rome.—

Let such not blind thee to the interlude

Which was not also holy, yet did come 'Twixt sacramental actions:—
brotherhood,

Despised even there,—and something of the doom

Of Remus, in the trenches. Listen now—

Rossi died silent near where Cæsar died.

HE did not say, "My Brutus, is it thou?"

Instead, rose Italy and testified,
"'Twas I, and I am Brutus.—I

avow."
At which the whole world's laugh of

scorn replied,

"A poor maimed copy of Brutus!"

Too much like, Indeed, to be so unlike. Too un-

skilled
At Philippi and the honest battle-

pike,
To be so skilful where a man is killed
Near Pompey's statue, and the

daggers strike
At unawares i' the throat. Was thus
fulfilled

An omen of great Michel Angelo,— When Marcus Brutus he conceived complete,

And strove to hurl him out by blow on blow

Upon the marble, at Art's thunderheat,

Till haply some pre-shadow rising slow

Of what his Italy would fancy meet To be called Brutus, straight his plastic hand

Fell back before his prophet soul, and left

A fragment . . . a maimed Brutus, —but more grand

Than this, so named of Rome, was!

Let thy weft

Be of one woof and warp, Mazzini!
—stand

With no man of a spotless fame bereft—

Not for Italia! Neither stand apart,

No, not for the republic !—from those pure

Brave men who hold the level of thy heart

In patriot truth, as lover and as doer, Albeit they will not follow where thou art

As extreme theorist. Trust and distrust fewer;

And so bind strong and keep unstained the cause

Which, at God's signal, war-trumps newly blown

Shall yet annuntiate to the world's applause.

xx

Just now, the world is busy: it has grown

A Fair-going world. Imperial England draws

The flowing ends of the earth, from Fez, Canton,

Delhi and Stockholm, Athens and Madrid,

The Russias and the vast Americas, As a queen gathers in her robes amid

Her golden cincture,—isles, peninsulas,
Capes continents far inland

Capes, continents, far inland countries hid

By jaspar sands and hills of chrysoprase,

All trailing in their splendours through the door

Of the new Crystal Palace. Every nation,

To every other nation, strange of yore,
Shall face to face give civic salutation,

And hold up in a proud right hand before

That congress, the best work which she could fashion

By her best means—" These corals, will you please

To match against your oaks? They grow as fast Within my wilderness of purple

seas."-

"This diamond stared upon me as I

passed (As a live god's eye from a marble

frieze)

Along a dark of diamonds. Is it classed?"-

"I wove these stuffs so subtly. that the gold

Swims to the surface of the silk, like cream,

And curdles to fair patterns. Ye behold!"-

"These delicated muslins rather seem Than be, you think? Nay, touch them and be bold,

Though such veiled Chakhi's face in Hafiz' dream."-

"These carpets-you walk slow on them like kings,

Inaudible like spirits, while your foot Dips deep in velvet roses and such Your hands have worked well. Is things.

"Even Apollonius might commend this flute.1

The music, winding through the Which generous souls may perfect and stops, upsprings

To make the player very rich. Compute."-

with your wine

The very sun its grapes were ripened under.

Drink light and juice together, and each fine."-

"This model of a steam-ship moves your wonder?

You should behold it crushing down the brine,

Like a blind Tove who feels his way with thunder "-

"Here's sculpture! Ah, we live too! Why not throw

Our life into our marbles? Art has place

For other artists after Angelo."-"I tried to paint out here a natural face-

For nature includes Raffael, as we know.

Not Raffael nature. Will it help my case ? "---

" Methinks you will not match this steel of ours!"-

" Nor you this porcelain! One might think the clay

Retained in it the larvæ of the flowers.

They bud so, round the cup, the old spring way."-

"Nor you these carven woods, where birds in bowers,

With twisting snakes and climbing cupids, play."

O Magi of the East and of the West. Your incense, gold, and myrrh are excellent .-

What gifts for Christ, then, bring ye with the rest?

your courage spent

In handwork only? Have you nothing best,

present. And He shall thank the givers for ?

No light "Here's goblet-glass, to take in Of teaching, liberal nations, for the

> Who sit in darkness when it is not night?

No cure for wicked children? Christ. —no cure!

No help for women sobbing out of sight

Because men made the laws? No brothel-lure

Burnt out by popular lightnings? —Hast thou found

No remedy, my England, for such woes?

No outlet, Austria, for the scourged and bound,

No entrance for the exiled? No repose,

¹ Philostratus relates of Apollonius that he objected to the musical instrument of Linus the Rhodian, its incompetence to enrich and beautify. The history of music in our day, would, upon the former point, sufficiently confute the philosopher-

Russia, for knouted Poles worked By its own noble breadth, and fortiunderground,

And gentle ladies bleached among the snows? -

No mercy for the slave. America?— No hope for Rome, free France,

chivalric France ?-Alas, great nations have great

shames, I say.

No pity, O world, no tender utterance prayers Of benediction, and stretched this way

To poor Italia baffled by mischance ?-O gracious nations, give some ear to me!

You all go to your Fair, and I am one Dropt inwards from her eyes, and Who at the roadside of humanity Beseech your alms,—a justice to be

done. So, prosper!

In the name of Italy, Meantime, her patriot dead have benison!

They only have done well; and what they did

Being perfect, it shall triumph. Let them slumber.

No king of Egypt in a pyramid Is safer from oblivion, though he number

Full seventy cerements for a cover-

These Dead be seeds of life, and shall

encumber The sad heart of the land until it

The clammy clods and let out the spring-growth

In beatific green through every bruise.

The tyrant should take heed to what he doth,

Since every victim-carrion turns to use,

And drives a chariot, like a god made wroth.

Against each piled injustice. Ay, the least

Dead for Italia, not in vain has died. However vainly, ere life's struggle ceased,

To mad dissimilar ends they swerved aside.

Each grave her nationality has pieced

fied.

And pinned it deeper to the soil. Forlorn

Of thanks, be, therefore, no one of these graves!

Not hers, -who, at her husband's side, in scorn.

Outfaced the whistling shot and hissing waves,

Until she felt her little babe unborn Recoil, within her, from the violent staves

And bloodhounds of the world: at which, her life

followed it Beyond the hunters. Garibaldi's

wife And child died so. And now, the seaweeds fit

Her body like a proper shroud and

And murmurously the ebbing waters The little pebbles, while she lies

interred In the sea-sand. Perhaps, ere dying

She looked up in his face which

never stirred From its clenched anguish, as to make

For leaving him for his, if so she

Well he remembers that she could not choose.

A memorable grave! Another is At Genoa, where a king may fitly lie,— Who bursting that heroic heart of

his At lost Novara, that he could not die,

Though thrice into the cannon's eyes for this He plunged his shuddering steed, and

felt the sky Reel back between the fire-shocks:

-stripped away The ancestral ermine ere the smoke

had cleared. And naked to the soul, that none

might say His kingship covered what was base

and bleared With treason, he went out an exile. yea,

vered.

XXIII

Yea, verily, Charles Albert has died

And if he lived not all so, as one spoke. The sin pass softly with the passing

For he was shriven, I think, in cannon smoke.

And taking off his crown, made visible

He shattered his own hand and heart. "So best,"

His last words were upon his lonely bed.-

"I do not end like popes and dukes at least-

Thank God for it." And now that he is dead.

Admitting it is proved and mani-

That he was worthy, with a discrowned head,

To measure heights with patriots. let them stand

Beside the man in his Oporto shroud, And each vouchsafe to take him by the hand,

And kiss him on the cheek, and say aloud,

"Thou, too, hast suffered for our native land!

My brother, thou art one of us. Be proud."

Still, graves, when Italy is talked upon!

Still, still, the patriot's tomb, the stranger's hate.

Still Niobe! still fainting in the sun By whose most dazzling arrows violate

Her beauteous offspring perished! Has she won

Nothing but garlands for the graves, from Fate?

Nothing but death-songs?-Yet, be it understood,

Life throbs in noble Piedmont! while the feet

Of Rome's clay image, dabbled soft in blood,

An exiled patriot! Let him be re- Grow flat with dissolution, and, as meet.

Will soon be shovelled off, like other

To leave the passage free in church and street.

And I, who first took hope up in this song.

Because a child was singing one . . . behold.

The hope and omen were not, haply, wrong!

A hero's forehead. Shaking Austria's Poets are soothsayers still, like those of old

Who studied flights of doves,—and creatures young

And tender, mighty meanings, may unfold.

xxv

The sun strikes, through the windows, up the floor:

Stand out in it, my own young Florentine,

Not two years old, and let me see thee more!

It grows along thy amber curls, to shine Brighter than elsewhere. Now.

look straight before, And fix thy brave blue English eyes

on mine, And from thy soul, which fronts

the future so, With unabashed and unabated gaze, Teach me to hope for, what the Angels know,

When they smile clear as thou dost. Down God's ways,

With just alighted feet between the snow

And snowdrops, where a little lamb may graze,

Thou hast no fear, my lamb, about the road,

Albeit in our vainglory we assume That, less than we have, thou hast learnt of God.

Stand out, my blue-eyed prophet !thou, to whom

The earliest world-day light that ever flowed.

Through Casa Guidi windows, chanced to come!

Now shake the glittering nimbus of thy hair,

and be God's witness;-that the elemental

everywhere.

To cleanse the water courses, and prevent all

Concrete obstructions which infest the air !

-That earth's alive, and gentle or ungentle Motions within her, signify but

growth:

The ground swells greenest o'er the labouring moles.

Howe'er the uneasy world is vexed and wroth.

Look round them with a smile upon

the mouth.

tolls.

Who said we should be better if like these?

New springs of life are gushing And we . . . despond we for the future, though

Posterity is smiling at our knees. Convicting us of folly? Let us go-We will trust God. The blank interstices

Men take for ruins. He will build into With pillared marbles rare, or knit

With generous arches, till the fane's complete.

This world has no perdition, if some

Young children, lifted high on parent | Such cheer I gather from thy smiling, Sweet !

The self-same cherub faces which emboss

And take for music every bell that The rail, lean inward to the mercyseat.

AURORA LEIGH

(1857)

FIRST BOOK

OF writing many books there is no end;

And I who have written much in prose and verse

For others' uses, will write now for mine.-

Will write my story for my better self, As when you paint your portrait for a friend.

Who keeps it in a drawer and looks at it Long after he has ceased to love you,

just

To hold together what he was and is.

Lewriting thus, am still what men call young:

I have not so far left the coasts of life To travel inland, that I cannot hear That murmur of the outer Infinite

their sleep

When wondered at for smiling; not so

Beside the nursery-door, with finger

"Hush, hush-here's too much noise!" while her sweet eyes Leap forward, taking part against her

In the child's riot. Still I sit and feel My father's slow hand, when she had left us both.

Stroke out my childish curls across his knee;

And hear Assunta's daily jest (she

He liked it better than a better jest) Inquire how many golden scudi went To make such ringlets. O my father's hand,

Stroke the poor hair down, stroke it heavily.—

Draw, press the child's head closer to thy knee!

Which unweaned babies smile at in I'm still too young, too young, to sit alone.

I write. My mother was a Florentine. But still I catch my mother at her Whose rare blue eyes were shut from seeing me

When scarcely I was four years old : my life,

A poor spark snatched up from a failing lamp

Which went out therefore. She was weak and frail:

She could not bear the joy of giving

The mother's rapture slew her. If her

Had left a longer weight upon my lips, It might have steadied the uneasy breath,

And reconciled and fraternised my

With the new order. As it was, indeed, I felt a mother-want about the world. And still went seeking, like a bleating lamb

Left out at night, in shutting up the fold,-

As restless as a nest-deserted bird Grown chill through something being away, though what

I, Aurora Leigh, was It knows not. born

To make my father sadder, and myself To move his comfortable island-Not overjoyous, truly. Women know The way to rear up children (to be just),

They know a simple, merry, tender knack

Of tying sashes, fitting baby-shoes, And stringing pretty words that make no sense,

And kissing full sense into empty words;

Which things are corals to cut life upon,

Although such trifles: children learn by such,

Love's holy earnest in a pretty play, And get not over-early solemnised,-But seeing, as in a rose-bush, Love's Divine.

Which burns and hurts not,-not a single bloom,—

Become aware and unafraid of Love. Such good do mothers. Fathers love as well

-Mine did, I know,-but still with heavier brains.

And wills more consciously responsible.

And not as wisely, since less foolishly;

So mothers have God's licence to be missed.

My father was an austere Englishman, Who, after a dry life-time spent at

In college-learning, law, and parish

Was flooded with a passion unaware, His whole provisioned and complacent past

Drowned out from him that moment. As he stood

In Florence, where he had come to spend a month

And note the secret of Da Vinci's drains.

He musing somewhat absently perhaps Some English question . . . whether men should pay

The unpopular but necessary tax With left or right hand—in the alien

In that great square of the Santissima,

There drifted past him (scarcely marked enough

scorn).

A train of priestly banners, cross and psalm,—

The white-veiled rose-crowned maidens holding up

Tall tapers, weighty for such wrists, aslant To the blue luminous tremor of the air.

And letting drop the white wax as they went

To eat the bishop's wafer at the church:

From which long trail of chanting priests and girls, A face flashed like a cymbal on his

And shook with silent clangour brain

and heart, Transfiguring him to music. Thus,

even thus, He too received his sacramental gift

With eucharistic meanings; for he loved.

And thus beloved, she died. heard it said

That but to see him in the first surprise

Of widower and father, nursing me,

Unmothered little child of four years old.

His large man's hands afraid to touch my curls,

As if the gold would tarnish,—his grave lips

Contriving such a miserable smile, As if he knew needs must, or I should

die, And yet 'twas hard,—would almost

make the stones

Cry out for pity. There's a verse he

In Santa Croce to her memory,

"Weep for an infant too young to weep much

When death removed this mother "— stops the mirth

To-day, on women's faces when they walk

With rosy children hanging on their gowns,

Under the cloister, to escape the sun That scorches in the piazza. After which,

He left our Florence, and made haste to hide

Himself, his prattling child, and silent grief,

Among the mountains above Pelago; Because unmothered babes, he thought, had need

Of mother nature more than others use,

And Pan's white goats, with udders warm and full

Of mystic contemplations, come to feed

Poor milkless lips of orphans like his own—

Such scholar-scraps he talked, I've heard from friends,

For even prosaic men, who wear grief long,

Will get to wear it as a hat aside With a flower stuck in't. Father, then, and child.

We lived among the mountains many years,

years, God's silence on the outside of the

And we, who did not speak too loud, within;

house,

And old Assunta to make up the fire, Crossing herself whene'er a sudden flame

Which lightened from the firewood, made alive

That picture of my mother on the wall.

The painter drew it after she was dead; And when the face was finished, throat and hands,

Her cameriera carried him, in hate Of the English-fashioned shroud, the last brocade

She dressed in at the Pitti. "He should paint

No sadder thing than, that," she swore, "to wrong

Her poor signora." Therefore very strange

The effect was. I, a little child, would crouch For hours upon the floor, with knees

drawn up,
And gaze across them, half in terror,

half In adoration, at the picture there,— That swan-like supernatural white

life, Just sailing upward from the red stiff

Silk
Which seemed to have no part in it.

Which seemed to have no part in it, nor power To keep it from quite breaking out of

bounds: For hours I sate and stared. Assunta's

And my poor father's melancholy eyes Still pointed that way. That way, went my thoughts

When wandering beyond sight. And as I grew

In years, I mixed, confused, unconsciously,

Whatever I last read or heard or dreamed,

Abhorrent, admirable, beautiful,

Pathetical, or ghastly, or grotesque, With still that face . . . which did not therefore change,

But kept the mystic level of all forms And fears and admirations; was by

turns Ghost, fiend, and angel, fairy, witch,

and sprite,—
A dauntless Muse who eyes a dreadful Fate,

A loving Psyche who loses sight of Love,

A still Medusa, with mild milky brows

snakes

Whose slime falls fast as sweat will: or, anon,

Our Lady of the Passion, stabbed He taught me all the ignorance of men with swords

Where the Babe sucked: or. Lamia in her first

Moonlighted pallor, ere she shrunk and blinked.

And, shuddering, wriggled down to the unclean :

Or my own mother, leaving her last

In her last kiss, upon the baby-mouth My father pushed down on the bed for

Or my dead mother, without smile or

Buried at Florence. All which images. Concentred on the picture, glassed themselves

The incoherences of change and death Are represented fully, mixed and merged.

In the smooth fair mystery of perpetual Life.

And while I stared away my childish

child!)

My father, who through love had suddenly

Thrown off the old conventions. broken loose

From chin-bands of the soul, like Lazarus.

Yet had no time to learn to talk and walk

Or grow anew familiar with the sun,-Who had reached to freedom, not to action, lived,

But lived as one entranced, with thoughts, not aims,-

Whom love had unmade from a common man

But not completed to an uncommon

My father taught me what he had learnt the best

Before he died and left me, -grief and

And, seeing we had books among the hills.

all curdled and all clothed upon with Strong words of counselling souls. confederate

With vocal pines and waters, -out of hooks

And how God laughs in heaven when any man

"Here I'm learned: this I Savs. understand:

In that, I am never caught at fault or doubt."

He sent the schools to school demonstrating

A fool will pass for such through one mistake.

While a philosopher will pass for such. Through said mistakes being ventured in the gross

And heaped up to a system.

I am like. They tell me, my dear father. Broader brows

Before my meditative childhood ... as Howbeit, upon a slenderer undergrowth

Of delicate features.—paler, near as grave:

But then my mother's smile breaks up the whole.

And makes it better sometimes than itself

Upon my mother's picture (ah, poor So, nine full years, our days were hid with God

> Among His mountains. I was just thirteen.

> Still growing like the plants from unseen roots

> In tongue-tied Springs,-and suddenly awoke

> To full life and its needs and agonies. With an intense, strong, struggling heart beside

> A stone-dead father. Life, struck sharp on death,

> Makes awful lightning. His last word was, "Love-"

> "Love, my child, love, love!"-(then he had done with grief)

> "Love, my child." Ere I answered he was gone,

> And none was left to love in all the world.

> There, ended childhood: what succeeded next

I recollect as, after fevers, men

Thread back the passage of delirium, Missing the turn still, baffled by the door:

Smooth endless days, notched here and there with knives:

A weary, wormy darkness, spurred i' the flank

With flame, that it should eat and end itself

Like some tormented scorpion. Then,

I do remember clearly, how there

A stranger with authority, not right (I thought not), who commanded, caught me up

From old Assunta's neck; how, with a shriek.

She let me go,—while I, with ears too

Of my father's silence, to shriek back a word.

all a child's astonishment at grief

Stared at the wharfage where she stood and moaned,

My poor Assunta, where she stood and moaned!

The white walls, the blue hills, my Italy,

Drawn backward from the shuddering steamer-deck,

Like one in anger drawing back her

Which suppliants catch at. Then the bitter sea

Inexorably pushed between us both. And sweeping up the ship with my despair

Threw us out as a pasture to the stars.

Ten nights and days we voyaged on the deep;

Ten nights and days, without the common face

Of any day or night; the moon and

Cut off from the green reconciling earth,

To starve into a blind ferocity

And glare unnatural; the very sky (Dropping its bell-net down upon the

As if no human heart should scape

Bedraggled with the desolating salt, By frigid use of life (she was not old,

Until it seemed no more that holy heaven

To which my father went. All new. and strange—

The universe turned stranger, for a child.

Then, land !-then, England ! oh, the frosty cliffs

Looked cold upon me. Could I find a

Among those mean red houses through the fog?

And when I heard my father's language first

From alien lips which had no kiss for mine.

I wept aloud, then laughed, then wept, then wept,— And some one near me said the child

was mad Through much sea-sickness. The

train swept us on. Was this my father's England? the

great Isle? The ground seemed cut up from the

fellowship Of verdure, field from field, as man

from man; The skies themselves looked low and

positive, As almost you could touch them with

a hand And dared to do it, they were so far off

From God's celestial crystals; all things, blurred And dull and vague. Did Shake-

speare and his mates

Absorb the light here ?-not a hill or

With heart to strike a radiant colour

Or active outline on the indifferent

I think I see my father's sister stand Upon the hall-step of her countryhouse

To give me welcome. She stood straight and calm.

Her somewhat narrow forehead braided tight

As if for taming accidental thoughts From possible pulses; brown hair pricked with grev

Although my father's elder by a year), A nose drawn sharply, yet in delicate lines:

A close mild mouth, a little soured about

The ends, through speaking unrequited loves,

peradventure niggardly halftruths:

have smiled,

But never, never have forgot them

Of perished summers, like a rose in a To draw the new light closer, catch

Kept more for ruth than pleasure,—if Less blindly. past bloom,

Past fading also.

She had lived, we'll say, A harmless life, she called a virtuous

life. A quiet life, which was not life at all (But that, she had not lived enough to

know), Between the vicar and the county

squires.

The lord-lieutenant looking down sometimes

From the empyreal, to assure their souls

Against chance-vulgarisms, and, in the abyss,

The apothecary looked on once a year, To prove their soundness of humility. The poor-club exercised her Christian gifts

Of knitting stockings, stitching petticoats.

Because we are of one flesh after all And need one flannel (with a proper

Of difference in the quality)—and still The book-club, guarded from your modern trick

Of shaking dangerous questions from the crease.

Preserved her intellectual. She had

A sort of cage-bird life, born in a cage, Accounting that to leap from perch to

Was act and joy enough for any bird. Dear heaven, how silly are the things that live

In thickets and eat berries!

I. alas. A wild bird scarcely fledged, was brought to her cage.

And she was there to meet me. Very kind.

Bring the clean water; give out the fresh seed.

Eves of no colour,—once they might | She stood upon the steps to welcome me.

Calm, in black garb. I clung about her neck,-

In smiling; cheeks, in which was yet Young babes, who catch at every shred of wool

> and cling In my ears, my father's

word

Hummed ignorantly, as the sea in shells.

"Love, love, my child." She, black there with my grief,

Might feel my love—she was his sister once-

I clung to her. A moment, she seemed moved.

Kissed me with cold lips, suffered me to cling,

And drew me feebly through the hall, into

The room she sate in.

There with some strange spasm Of pain and passion, she wrung loose my hands

Imperiously, and held me at arm's length,

And with two grey-steel naked-bladed eyes

Searched through my face,—ay, stabbed it through and through, Through brows and cheeks and chin,

as if to find A wicked murderer in my innocent face, If not here, there perhaps. Then,

drawing breath, She struggled for her ordinary calm, And missed it rather,—told me not to shrink.

As if she had told me not to lie or swear,-

"She loved my father, and would love me too

As long as I deserved it." Very kind.

I understood her meaning afterward;

She thought to find my mother in my face.

And questioned it for that. For she,
my aunt,
Had loved my father truly, as she

could,

And hated, with the gall of gentle souls,

My Tuscan mother, who had fooled away

A wise man from wise courses, a good man

From obvious duties, and, depriving her,

His sister, of the household precedence,

Had wronged his tenants, robbed his native land,

And made him mad, alike by life and death,

In love and sorrow. She had noted for

In love and sorrow. She had pored for years

What sort of woman could be suitable To her sort of hate, to entertain it with;

And so, her very curiosity

Became hate too, and all the idealism She ever used in life, was used for hate,

Till hate, so nourished, did exceed at last

The love from which it grew, in

strength and heat,
And wrinkled her smooth conscience

with a sense

Of disputable virtue (say not, sin)
When Christian doctrine was enforced
at church.

And thus my father's sister was to me My mother's hater. From that day, she did

Her duty to me (I appreciate it In her own word as spoken to herself).

Her duty, in large measure, wellpressed out,

But measured always. She was generous, bland,

More courteous than was tender, gave me still

The first place,—as if fearful that God's saints

Would look down suddenly and say,
"Herein
You missed a point I think through

You missed a point, I think, through lack of love."

Alas, a mother never is afraid
Of speaking angerly to any child,
Since love, she knows, is justified of
love.

And I, I was a good child on the whole, A meek and manageable child. Why not?

I did not live, to have the faults of life:
There seemed more true life in my
father's grave

Than in all England. Since that threw me off

Who fain would cleave (his latest will, they say,

Consigned me to his land), I only thought

Of lying quiet there where I was thrown

Like sea-weed on the rocks, and suffer her

To prick me to a pattern with her pin, Fibre from fibre, delicate leaf from leaf,

And dry out from my drowned anatomy

The last sea-salt left in me.

So it was.

I broke the copious curls upon my

In braids, because she liked smoothordered hair.

Heft off saying my sweet Tuscan words

Which still at any stirring of the heart Came up to float across the English phrase,

As lilies (Bene . . . or che ch'è), because

She liked my father's child to speak

She liked my father's child to speak his tongue.

I learnt the collects and the catechism,

The creeds, from Athanasius back to Nice.

The Articles . . . the Tracts against the times

(By no means Buonaventure's "Prick of Love").

And various popular synopses of Inhuman doctrines never taught by John,

Because she liked instructed plety.

I learnt my complement of classic

French (Kept pure of Balzac and neologism),

Of liberal education,—tongues, not

I learnt a little algebra, a little Of the mathematics, -- brushed with

extreme flounce The circle of the sciences, because She misliked women who are frivolous.

I learnt the royal genealogies Of Oviedo, the internal laws

Of the Burmese empire, . . . by how many feet .

Mount Chimborazo outsoars Himmeleh.

What navigable river joins itself To Lara, and what census of the year

Was taken at Klagenfurt,—because I learnt cross-stitch, because she did she liked

A general insight into useful facts.

I learnt much music,—such as would have been

As quite impossible in Johnson's day As still it might be wished-fine sleights of hand

And unimagined fingering, shuffling

The hearer's soul through hurricanes of notes

To a noisy Tophet; and I drew. costumes

From French engravings, nereids

neatly draped, With smirks of simmering godship,-

I washed in From nature, landscapes (rather say, washed out).

I danced the polka and Cellarius. Spunglass, stuffed birds, and modelled flowers in wax,

Because she liked accomplishments in girls. *

I read a score of books on womanhood To prove, if women do not think at all, They may teach thinking (to a

maiden-aunt Or else the author)—books demonstrating

Their right of comprehending husband's talk

When not too deep, and even of answering

With pretty "may it please you," or "so it is,"-

Their rapid insight and fine aptitude, I wonder if Brinvilliers suffered more

And German also, since she liked a | Particular worth and general mission-ariness.

> As long as they keep quiet by the fire And never say "no" when the world says "ay,"

> For that is fatal.—their angelic reach Of virtue, chiefly used to sit and darn, And fatten household sinners,—their, in brief,

Potential faculty in everything

Of abdicating power in it: she owned She liked a woman to be womanly,

And English women, she thanked God and sighed

(Some people always sigh in thanking God).

Were models to the universe. And

not like

To see me wear the night with empty hands,

A-doing nothing. So, my shepherdess Was something after all (the pastoral saints

Be praised for't), leaning lovelorn with pink eyes

To match her shoes, when I mistook the silks;

Her head uncrushed by that round weight of hat

So strangely similar to the tortoiseshell

Which slew the tragic poet.

By the way. The works of women are symbolical. We sew, sew, prick our fingers, dull our sight.

Producing what? A pair of slippers,

To put on when you're weary—or a

To stumble over and vex you . . . "curse that stool!"

Or else at best, a cushion, where you

And sleep, and dream of something we are not,

But would be for your sake. Alas, alas !

This hurts most, this . . . that, after all, we are paid

The worth of our work, perhaps.

In looking down Those years of education (to return), In the water-torture, . . . flood succeeding flood

To drench the incapable throat and split the veins . .

Than I did. Certain of your feebler souls

Go out in such a process; many pine To a sick, inodorous light; my own endured:

I had relations in the Unseen, and drew

The elemental nutriment and heat From nature, as earth feels the sun at nights,

Or as a babe sucks surely in the dark.

I kept the life, thrust on me, on the outside

Of the inner life, with all its ample

For heart and lungs, for will and intellect.

Inviolable by conventions. God, I thank Thee for that grace of Thine! At first,

I felt no life which was not patience,-

The thing she bade me, without heed to a thing

Beyond it, sate in just the chair she placed,

With back against the window, to ex-

The sight of the great lime-tree on the lawn.

Which seemed to have come on purpose from the woods

To bring the house a message,—av. and walked

Demurely in her carpeted low rooms, As if I should not, hearkening my own steps,

Misdoubt I was alive. books,

Was civil to her cousin, Romney Leigh,

Give ear to her vicar, tea to her visitors,

And heard them whisper, when I changed a cup

(I blushed for joy at that)—" The Italian child.

For all her blue eyes and her quiet

Thrives ill in England: she is paler | And she, she almost loved him, -even

Than when we came the last time: she will die."

"Will die." My cousin, Romney Leigh, blushed too. With sudden anger, and approaching

Said low between his teeth-" You're

wicked now? You wish to die and leave the world a-dusk

For others, with your naughty light blown out ? "

I looked into h s face defyingly. He might have known, that, being

what I was. 'Twas natural to like to get away

As far as dead folk can; and then indeed

Some people make no trouble when they die.

turned and went abruptly, slammed the door

And shut his dog out.

Romney, Romney Leigh. I have not named my cousin hitherto, And yet I used him as a sort of friend; My elder by few years, but cold and shy

And absent . . . tender, when he thought of it,

Which scarcely was imperative, grave betimes.

As well as early master of Leigh Hall, Whereof the nightmare sate upon his youth

Repressing all its seasonable delights, And agonising with a ghastly sense Of universal hideous want and wrong To incriminate possession. When he

From college to the country, very oft I read her He crossed the hills on visits to my

With gifts of blue grapes from the hothouses.

A book in one hand,—mere statistics

I chanced to lift the cover), count of all

The goats whose beards are sprouting down toward hell.

Against God's separating judgmenthour.

allowed

That sometimes he should seem to sigh my way;

It made him easier to be pitiful,

And sighing was his gift. So, undisturbed At whiles she let him shut my music

up
And push my needles down, and lead

And push my needles down, and lead me out

To see in that south angle of the house The figs grow black as if by a Tuscan rock.

On some light pretext. She would turn her head

At other moments, go to fetch a thing, And leave me breath enough to speak with him,

For his sake; it was simple.

Sometimes too

He would have saved me utterly, it seemed,

He stood and looked so.

Once, he stood so near He dropped a sudden hand upon my head

Bent down on woman's work, as soft

But then I rose and shook it off as fire.

The stranger's touch that took my father's place,

Yet dared seem soft.

I used him for a friend Before I ever knew him for a friend.

'Twas better, 'twas worse also, afterward:

We came so close, we saw our differences

Too intimately. Always Romney Leigh

Was looking for the worms, I for the gods.

A godlike nature his; the gods look

A godine nature his; the gods look down,
Incurious of themselves; and cer-

tainly
'Tis well I should remember, how,
those days.

I was a worm too, and he looked on

A little by his act perhaps, yet more By something in me, surely not my will,

I did not die. But slowly, as one in Of swoon,

To whom life creeps back in the form of death,

With a sense of separation, a blind pain

Of blank obstruction, and a roar i' the ears

Of visionary chariots which retreat As earth grows clearer . . . slowly, by degrees,

I woke, rose up . . . where was I ? in the world;

For uses, therefore, I must count worth while.

I had a little chamber in the house, As green as any privet-hedge a bird Might choose to build in, though the nest itself

Could show but dead-brown sticks and straws: the walls

Were green, the carpet was pure green, the straight

Small bed was curtained greenly, and the folds

Hung green about the window, which let in

The out-door world with all its greenery.

You could not push your head out

and escape

A dash of dawn-dew from the honey-

suckle, But so you were baptized into the

grace
And privilege of seeing. . . .

First, the lime (I had enough, there, of the lime, be sure.—

My morning-dream was often hummed away

By the bees in it); past the lime, the lawn,

Which, after sweeping broadly round the house,

Went trickling through the shrubberies in a stream

Of tender turf, and wore and lost itself

Among the acacias, over which, you saw

The irregular line of elms by the deep lane

Which stopped the grounds and dammed the overflow

Of arbutus and laurel. Out of sight

The lane was; sunk so deep, no foreign tramp

Nor drover of wild ponies out of Wales Could guess if lady's hall or tenant's lodge

Dispensed such odours,—though his stick well-crook'd

Might reach the lowest trail of blossoming briar

Which dipped upon the wall. Behind the elms,

And through their tops, you saw the folded hills

Striped up and down with hedges (burly oaks

Projecting from the lines to show themselves),

Through which my cousin Romney's chimneys smoked

As still as when a silent mouth in frost.

As still as when a silent mouth in frost Breathes—showing where the woodlands hid Leigh Hall;

While, far above, a jut of table-land, A promontory without water, stretched,—

You could not catch it if the days were thick.

Or took it for a cloud; but, otherwise The vigorous sun would catch it up at eve

And use it for an anvil till he had filled The she lves of heaven with burning thunderbolts,

And proved he need not rest so early:
—then,

When all his setting trouble was resolved

To a trance of passive glory, you might see

In apparition on the golden sky (Alas, my Giotto's background!) the

sheep run
Along the fine clear outline, small as

That run along a witch's scarlet thread.

Not a grand nature. Not my chestnutwoods

Of Vallombrosa, cleaving by the spurs

To the precipices. Not my headlong leaps

Of waters, that cry out for joy or fear In leaping through the palpitating pines,

Like a white soul tossed out to eternity With thrills of time upon it. Not indeed

My multitudinous mountains, sitting in

The magic circle, with the mutual touch

Electric, panting from their full deep hearts
Beneath the influent heavens, and

waiting for Communion and commission. Italy

Is one thing, England one.

On English ground
You understand the letter . . . ere
the fall,

How Adam lived in a garden. All the fields

Are tied up fast with hedges, nosegaylike;

The hills are crumpled plains,—the plains, parterres,—

The trees, round, woolly, ready to be clipped;

And if you seek for any wilderness You find, at best, a park. A nature tamed

And grown domestic like a barn-door fowl.

Which does not awe you with its claws and beak,

Nor tempt you to an eyrie too high up, But which, in cackling, sets you thinking of

Your eggs to-morrow at breakfast, in the pause

Of finer meditation.

Rather say,
A sweet familiar nature, stealing in
As a dog might, or child, to touch your
hand

Or pluck your gown, and humbly mind you so

Of presence and affection, excellent For inner uses, from the things without.

I could not be unthankful, I who was Entreated thus and holpen. In the room

I speak of, ere the house was well awake,

And also after it was well asleep,

I sate alone, and drew the blessing in Of all that nature. With a gradual step,

A stir among the leaves, a breath, a ray, I used to get up early, just to sit It came in softly, while the angels And watch the morning quicken in

A place for it beside me. The moon And hear the silence open like a

And swept my chamber clean of foolish Leaf after leaf,—and stroke with listthoughts.

The sun came, saying, "Shall I lift this light

Against the lime-tree, and you will not look?

I make the birds sing—listen! . . . but, for you,

God never hears your voice, excepting when

You lie upon the bed at nights and weep.

Then, something moved me. Then, I wakened up

More slowly than I verily write now, But wholly, at last, I wakened, opened wide

The window and my soul, and let the

And out-door sights sweep gradual gospels in,

Regenerating what I was. O Life. How oft we throw it off and think,— " Enough,

Enough of life in so much !-here's a

For rupture ;—herein we must break with Life,

Or be ourselves unworthy; here we are wronged,

Maimed, spoiled for aspiration: farewell Life!"

-And so, as froward babes, we hide our eyes

And think all ended.—Then, Life calls to us

In some transformed, apocryphal, new voice.

Above us, or below us, or around . . . Perhaps we name it Nature's voice, or Love's.

Tricking ourselves, because we are We gloriously forget ourselves, and more ashamed

To own our compensations than our Soul-forward, headlong, into a book's griefs:

Still, Life's voice!—still, we make our! Impassioned for its beauty and salt of peace with Life.

Soon

the grey,

flower.

less hand

The woodbine through the window, till at last

I came to do it with a sort of love, At foolish unaware: whereat I smiled,-

A melancholy smile, to catch myself Smiling for joy.

Capacity for joy Admits temptation. It seemed, next, worth while

To dodge the sharp sword set against my life;

To slip down stairs through all the sleepy house,

As mute as any dream there, and escape

As a soul from the body, out of doors,-

Glide through the shrubberies, drop into the lane,

And wander on the hills an hour or

Then back again before the house should stir.

Or else I sate on in my chamber green,

And lived my life, and thought my thoughts, and prayed

My prayers without the vicar; read my books,

Without considering whether they were fit

To do me good. Mark, there. We get no good

By being ungenerous, even to a book.

And calculating profits . . . so much help

By so much reading. It is rather when

plunge

profound.

truth-

And I, so young then, was not sullen. Tis then we get the right good from a

I read much. What my father taught before

From many a volume, Love re-emphasised

Upon the self-same pages: Theophrast

Grew tender with the memory of his

And Ælian made mine wet. trick of Greek

And Latin, he had taught me, as he

Have taught me wrestling or the game of fives

If such he had known, -most like a shipwrecked man

Who heaps his single platter with goats' cheese

And scarlet berries: or like any man Who loves but one, and so gives all at

Because he has it, rather than because He counts it worthy. Thus, my father gave:

And thus, as did the women formerly By young Achilles, when they pinned the veil

Across the boy's audacious front, and swept

With tuneful laughs the silver-fretted rocks,

He wrapt his little daughter in his large

Man's doublet, careless did it fit or no.

But, after I had read for memory, I read for hope. The path my father's

Had trod me out, which suddenly broke off

(What time he dropped the wallet of the flesh

And passed), alone I carried on, and set

My child-heart 'gainst the thorny underwood,

To reach the grassy shelter of the trees. Ah, babe i' the wood, without a brother-babe!

My own self-pity, like the redbreast bird,

Flies back to cover all that past with leaves.

weeps,

When any young wayfaring soul goes forth

Alone, unconscious of the perilous road.

The day-sun dazzling in his limpid eves.

To thrust his own way, he an alien. through

The world of books! Ah, you !-- you think it fine,

You clap hands—" A fair day!" you cheer him on.

As if the worst could happen were to rest

Too long beside a fountain. Yet, behold.

Behold!—the world of books is still the world:

And worldlings in it are less merciful And more puissant. For the wicked there

Are winged like angels. Every knife that strikes.

Is edged from elemental fire to assail A spiritual life. The beautiful seems right

By force of beauty, and the feeble wrong

Because of weakness. Power is justified.

Though armed against St. Michael. Many a crown

Covers bald foreheads. In the bookworld, true,

There's no lack, neither, of God's saints and kings,

That shake the ashes of the grave aside

From their calm locks, and undiscomfited

Look steadfast truths against Time's changing mask.

True, many a prophet teaches in the roads:

True, many a seer pulls down the flaming heavens

Upon his own head in strong martyrdom,

In order to light men a moment's space.

But stay !--who judges ?--who distinguishes

'Twixt Saul and Nahash justly, at first sight,

Sublimest danger, over which none And leaves king Saul precisely at the

To serve king David? who discerns at But, even so, God saved me; and.

The sound of the trumpets, when the trumpets blow

For Alaric as well as Charlemagne,? Who judges prophets, and can tell true seers

From conjurers? The child, there?

Would you leave That child to wander in a battle-field And push his innocent smile against

the guns?

Or even in the catacombs. . . . his torch

Grown ragged in the fluttering air. and all

The dark a-mutter round him? not a child!

I read books bad and good-some bad and good

At once: good aims not always make good books:

Well-tempered spades turn up illsmelling soils

In digging vineyards, even: books, that prove

God's being so definitely, that man's doubt

Grows self-defined the other side the

Made atheist by suggestion: moral books.

Exasperating to license: genial books.

Discounting from the human dignity: And merry books, which set you weeping when

The sun shines,—av, and melancholy books.

Which make you laugh that anyone should weep

In this disjointed life, for one wrong more.

The world of books is still the world, I write.

And both worlds have God's providence, thank God,

To keep and hearten: with some struggle, indeed,

Among the breakers, some hard swimming through

The deeps—I lost breath in my soul sometimes,

And cried, "God save me if there's any God."

being dashed

From error on to error, every turn Still brought me nearer to the central truth.

I thought so. All this anguish in the thick

Of men's opinions . . . press and counterpress,

Now up, now down, now underfoot, and now

Emergent . . . all the best of it. perhaps.

But throws you back upon a noble trust

And use of your own instinct.merely proves

Pure reason stronger than bare infer-

At strongest. Try it,—fix against heaven's wall

The scaling ladders of school logic—

Step by step!—Sight goes faster: that still rav

Which strikes out from you, how, you cannot tell,

And why, you know not (did you eliminate,

That such as you, indeed, should analyse?)

Goes straight and fast as light, and high as God.

The cygnet finds the water; but the man

Is born in ignorance of his element, And feels out blind at first, disorgan-

By sin i' the blood,—his spirit-insight dulled

And crossed by his sensations. Presently

We feel it quicken in the dark sometimes

Then, mark, be reverent, be obedient.

For those dumb motions of imperfect life

Are oracles of vital Deity

Attesting the Hereafter. Let who says

"The soul's a clean white paper," rather say,

A palimpsest, a prophet's holograph

Defiled, erased and covered by a monk's,—

The Apocalypse, by a Longus! poring on

Which obscene text, we may discern perhaps

Some fair, fine trace of what was written once,

Some upstroke of an alpha and omega Expressing the old scripture.

Books, books, books!
I had found the secret of a garretroom

Piled high with cases in my father's name:

Piled high, packed large,—where, creeping in and out

Among the giant fossils of my past,

Like some small nimble mouse between the ribs

Of a mastodon, I nibbled here and

Of a mastodon, I nibbled here and there

At this or that box, pulling through the gap,

In heats of terror, haste, victorious joy,

The first book first. And how I felt it beat

Under my pillow, in the morning's dark,

An hour before the sun would let me

An hour before the sun would let me read!

My books!

At last, because the time was ripe,

I chanced upon the poets.

As the earth

Plunges in fury, when the internal fires

Have reached and pricked her heart, and, throwing flat

The marts and tamples the triumphel

The marts and temples, the triumphal gates

And towers of observation, clears
herself

To elemental freedom—thus, my soul,

At poetry's divine first finger-touch, Let go conventions and sprang up surprised,

Convicted of the great eternities Before two worlds.

What's this, Aurora Leigh, You write so of the poets, and not laugh?

Those virtuous liars, dreamers after dark.

Exaggerators of the sun and moon, And soothsayers in a tea-cup?

I write so Of the only truth-tellers, now left to God.—

The only speakers of essential truth, Opposed to relative, comparative, And temporal truths; the only holders by

His sun-skirts, through conventional grey glooms:

The only teachers who instruct mankind,

From just a shadow on a charnel-wall, To find man's veritable stature out, Erect, sublime,—the measure of a man,

And that's the measure of an angel, says

The apostle. Ay, and while your common men

Build pyramids, gauge railroads, reign, reap, dine,

And dust the flaunty carpets of the world

For kings to walk on, or our senators, The poet suddenly will catch them up With his voice like a thunder . . . "This is soul.

This is life, this word is being said in heaven,

Here's God down on us! what are you about?"

How all those workers start amid their work,

Look round, look up, and feel, a moment's space,

That carpet-dusting, though a pretty trade,

Is not the imperative labour after all.

My own best poets, am I one with you,
That thus I love you,—or but one
through love?

Does all this smell of thyme about my feet

Conclude my visit to your holy hill In personal presence, or but testify The rustling of your vesture through my dreams

With influent odours? When my joy and pain,

My thought and aspiration, like the stops

Of pipe or flute, are absolutely dumb If not melodious, do you play on me, blow.

Would no sound come? or is the music mine.

As a man's voice or breath is called his own,

Inbreathed by the Life-breather? There's a doubt

For cloudy seasons!

But the sun was high When first I felt my pulses set themselves

For concord: when the rhythmic turbulence

Of blood and brain swept outward upon words,

As wind upon the alders, blanching them

By turning up their under-natures

They trembled in dilation. O delight And triumph of the poet,-who would sav

A man's mere "yes," a woman's common "no."

A little human hope of that or this. And says the word so that it burns you through

With a special revelation, shakes the heart

Of all the men and women in the world.

As if one came back from the dead and spoke,

With eyes too happy, a familiar thing Become divine i the utterance! while for him

The poet, the speaker, he expands with joy;

The palpitating angel in his flesh Thrills inly with consenting fellowship

To those innumerous spirits who sun themselves

Outside of time.

O life, O poetry, -Which means life in life! cognisant of life

Beyond this blood-beat, -passionate for truth

Beyond these senses, -- poetry, my

My eagle, with both grappling feet still hot

From Zeus's thunder, who has ravished me

My pipers,—and if, sooth, you did not | Away from all the shepherds, sheep, and dogs,

And set me in the Olympian roar and round

Of luminous faces, for a cup-bearer, To keep the mouths of all the godheads moist

For everlasting laughters,—I, myself, Half drunk across the beaker, with their eyes!

How those gods look!

Enough so, Ganymede, We shall not bear above a round or

We drop the golden cup at Heré's foot And swoon back to the earth,—and find ourselves

Face-down among the pine-cones. cold with dew.

While the dogs bark, and many a shepherd scoffs.

"What's come now to the youth?" Such ups and downs

Have poets.

Am I such indeed? The name Is royal, and to sign it like a queen. Is what I dare not,—though some royal blood

Would seem to tingle in me now and

With sense of power and ache, -with imposthumes

And manias usual to the race. How-

I dare not; 'tis too easy to go mad. And ape a Bourbon in a crown of straws:

The thing's too common.

Many fervent souls. Strike rhyme on rhyme, who would strike steel on steel

If steel had offered, in a restless heat Of doing something. Many tender souls

Have strung their losses on a rhyming thread,

As children, cowslips:—the more pains they take,

The work more withers. Young men,. ay, and maids,

Too often sow their wild oats in tame verse,

Before they sit down under their own vine

And live for use. Alas, near all the birds

Will sing at dawn,—and yet we do not With the eyes in it, start between the

The chaffering swallow for the holy lark

In those days, though, I never analysed.

Not even myself. Analysis comes late. You catch a sight of Nature, earliest, In full front sun-face, and your eyelids wink

And drop before the wonder of 't;

you miss The form, through seeing the light. lived, those days,

And wrote because I lived—unlicensed

My heart beat in my brain. Life's violent flood

Abolished bounds,-and, which my neighbour's field,

Which mine, what mattered? so in youth.

We play at leap-frog over the god Term:

The love within us and the love with-

Are mixed, confounded; if we are loved or love,

We scarce distinguish. So, with other power.

Being acted on and acting seem the same:

In that first onrush of life's chariotwheels. We know not if the forests move or we.

And so, like most young poets, in a

flush Of individual life, I poured myself

Along the veins of others, and achieved Mere lifeless imitations of live verse,

And made the living answer for the dead,

Profaning nature. "Touch not, do not taste,

Nor handle,"-we're too legal, who write young:

We beat the phorminx till we hurt our thumbs.

As if still ignorant of counterpoint; We call the Muse . . . "O Muse, benignant Muse!"

As if we had seen her purple-braided | Upon the world's cold cheek to make head

boughs

As often as a stag's. What makebelieve.

With so much earnest! what effete results. From virile efforts! what cold wire-

drawn odes. From such white heats!-bucolics.

where the cows Would scare the writer if they splashed

the mud In lashing off the flies, -didactics. driven

Against the heels of what the master said;

And counterfeiting epics, shrill with trumps

A babe might blow between two straining cheeks

Of bubbled rose, to make his mother laugh:

And elegiac griefs, and songs of love.

Like cast-off nosegays picked up on the road,

The worse for being warm: all these things, writ On happy mornings, with a morning

heart, That leaps for love, is active for

resolve. Weak for artonly. Oft, the ancient

forms Will thrill, indeed, in carrying the

young blood. The wine-skins, now and then, a little

warped, Will crack even, as the new wine gurgles in.

Spare the old bottles !--spill not the new wine.

By Keats's soul, the man who never stepped

In gradual progress like another man. But, turning grandly on his central

Ensphered himself in twenty perfect

And died, not young, (the life of a long life,

Distilled to a mere drop, falling like a

it burn

soul.

I count it strange, and hard to under- I know I have not ground you down

That nearly all young poets should write old ;

That Pope was sexagenarian at six-

And beardless Byron academical. And so with others. It may be, per-

Such have not settled long and deep

enough In trance, to attain to clairvoyance. and still

The memory mixes with the vision. spoils,

And works it turbid.

Or perhaps, again, In order to discover the Muse-Sphinx. The melancholy desert must sweep round,

Behind you, as before.-

For me, I wrote False poems, like the rest, and thought them true,

Because myself was true in writing

I, peradventure, have writ true ones since

With less complacence.

But I could not hide My quickening inner life from those at

They saw a light at a window now and then.

They had not set there. Who had set it there?

My father's sister started when she caught

My soul agaze in my eyes. She could not say

I had no business with a sort of soul. But plainly she objected,-and demurred.

That souls were dangerous things to carry straight

Through all the spilt saltpetre of the world.

She said sometimes, "Aurora, have you done

read that book?

And are you ready for the crochet I learnt to love that England. Very here?"

For ever;) by that strong excepted As if she said, "I know there's something wrong:

enough

To flatten and bake you to a wholesome crust

For household uses and proprieties, Before the rain has got into my barn And set the grains a-sprouting. What, vou're green

With out-door impudence? you almost grow?"

To which I answered, "Would she hear my task,

And verify my abstract of the book? And should I sit down to the crochet work?

Was such her pleasure?"... Then I sate and teased

The patient needle till it spilt the thread.

Which oozed off from it in meandering lace

From hour to hour. I was not, therefore, sad:

My soul was singing at a work apart Behind the wall of sense, as safe from

As sings the lark when sucked up out of sight,

In vortices of glory and blue air.

And so, through forced work and spontaneous work,

The inner life informed the outer life. Reduced the irregular blood to settled rhythms.

Made cool the forehead with freshsprinkling dreams,

And, rounding to the spheric soul the

Pined body, struck a colour up the cheeks.

Though somewhat faint. I clenched my brows across

My blue eyes greatening in the looking-glass,

And said, "We'll live, Aurora! we'll be strong.

The dogs are on us—but we will not die.

Your task this morning ?—Have you | Whoever lives true life, will love true love.

oft.

Before the day was born, or otherwise Through secret windings of the afternoons.

I threw my hunters off and plunged myself

Among the deep hills, as a hunted It sounded as an instrument that's

Will take the waters, shivering with Too far off for the tune—and yet it's the fear

And passion of the course. And when, at last

Escaped,—so many a green slope built on slope Betwixt me and the enemy's house

behind, I dared to rest, or wander,—like a

Made sweeter for the step upon the

grass,-And view the ground's most gentle

dimplement

(As if God's finger touched but did For what might be. not press

In making England!), such an up and

Of verdure,—nothing too much up or down. A ripple of land; such little hills, the

sky Can stoop to tenderly and the wheat-

fields climb;

Such nooks of valleys, lined with orchises,

Fed full of noises by invisible streams; And open pastures, where you scarcely

White daisies from white dew,-at intervals

The mythic oaks and elm-trees standing out

Self-poised upon their prodigy of shade.—

I thought my father's land was worthy too

Of being my Shakespeare's.

Very oft alone, Unlicensed; not unfrequently with

leave To walk the third with Romney and

his friend The rising painter, Vincent Carrington,

Whom men judge hardly, as beebonneted.

Because he holds that, paint a body well,

You paint a soul by implication, like The grand first Master. Pleasant walks! for if

He said . . . "When I was last in Italy "

played

fine To listen.

Often we walked only two.

If cousin Romney pleased to walk with me.

We read, or talked, or quarrelled, as it chanced: We were not lovers, nor even friends

well-matched— Say rather, scholars upon different

tracks. And thinkers disagreed; he, overfull

Of what is, and I, haply, overbold But then the thrushes sang,

And shook my pulses and the elms' new leaves .--

At which I turned, and held my finger up,

And bade him mark that, howsoe'er the world

Went ill, as he related, certainly The thrushes still sang in it.—At which word

His brow would soften,—and he bore with me

In melancholy patience, not unkind, While, breaking into voluble ecstasy, I flattered all the beauteous country round,

As poets use . . . the skies, the clouds, the fields,

The happy violets hiding from the roads

The primroses run down to, carrying gold,-

The tangled hedgerows, where the cows push out

Impatient horns and tolerant churning mouths 'Twixt dripping ash-boughs,—hedge-

rows all alive With birds and gnats and large white

butterflies

Which look as if the May-flower had caught life

And palpitated forth upon the wind.-

Hills, vales, woods, netted in a silver And rosebuds reddening where the

the hills.

vales.

the woods. And cottage-gardens smelling every-

where, Confused with smell of orchards. " See," I said,

"And see! is God not with us on the In which fantastic mood I bounded

we do?

Who says there's nothing for the poor and vile

Save poverty and wickedness? behold!"

And ankle-deep in English grass I With my gown in the dew, took will leaped.

And clapped my hands, and called all very fair.

In the beginning when God called all good,

Even then, was evil near us, it is writ. But we, indeed, who call things good and fair.

The evil is upon us while we speak; "Deliver us from evil", let us pray.

SECOND BOOK

Times followed one another. Came a

I stood upon the brink of twenty years,

And looked before and after, as I stood

Woman and artist-either incom-

Both credulous of completion. There

The whole creation in my little cup, And smiled with thirsty lips before I drank.

"Good health to you and me, sweet To choose from. neighbour mine,

And all these peoples."

I was glad, that day; The June was in me, with its multitudes

Of nightingales all singing in the dark,

calyx split.

Farms, granges, doubled up among I felt so young, so strong, so sure of God!

And cattle grazing in the watered So glad, I could not choose be very wise!

And cottage-chimneys smoking from And, old at twenty, was inclined to pull

My childhood backward in a childish iest

To see the face of 't once more, and farewell!

forth

And shall we put Him down by aught | At early morning, would not wait so long

As even to snatch my bonnet by the strings,

But, brushing a green trail across the lawn

and way

Among the acacias of the shrubberies, To fly my fancies in the open air

And keep my birthday, till my aunt awoke

To stop good dreams. Meanwhile I murmured on.

As honeyed bees keep humming to themselves;

"The worthiest poets have remained uncrowned

Till death has bleached their foreheads to the bone, And so with me it must be, unless I

Unworthy of the grand adversity.—

And certainly I would not fail so much.

What, therefore, if I crown myself to-

In sport, not pride, to learn the feel of

Before my brows be numb as Dante's own

To all the tender pricking of such leaves?

Such leaves! what leaves?" I pulled the branches down

" Not the bay! I choose no bay

The fates deny us if we are overbold: Nor myrtle-which means chiefly love; and love

Is something awful which one dares not touch

So early o' mornings. This verbena | My cousin!" strains

and hard by,

flower-apples.

the wall,

But thinking of a wreath. Large I saw at once the thing had witchleaves, smooth leaves,

green.

I like such ivy; bold to leap a height 'Twas strong to climb! as good to grow on graves

As twist about a thyrsus; pretty too, (And that's not ill) when twisted round a comb.'

Thus speaking to myself, half singing it,

Because some thoughts are fashioned like a bell

To ring with once being touched, I drew a wreath Drenched, blinding me with dew,

across my brow, And fastening it behind so, . . .

turning faced . . . My public !-cousin Romney-

with a mouth Twice graver than his eyes.

I stood there fixed-My arms up, like the carvatid sole Of some abolished temple, helplessly Persistent in a gesture which derides A former purpose. Yet my blush was flame.

As if from flax, not stone.

" Aurora Leigh, The earliest of Auroras!"

Hand stretched out I clasped, as shipwrecked men will clasp a hand,

Indifferent to the sort of palm. The

Had caught me at my pastime, writing down

My foolish name too near upon the

Which drowned me with a blush as And only miss your cousin; 'tis not foolish. "You.

The smile died out in his eyes The point of passionate fragrance; And dropped upon his lips, a cold dead weight,

This guelder-rose, at far too slight a For just a moment . . . " Here's a book. I found!

Of the wind, will toss about her No name writ on it-poems, by the form:

Ah—there's my choice!—that ivy on Some Greek upon the margin, lady's Greek,

That headlong ivy! not a leaf will Without the accents. Read it? Not a word.

craft in't,

Serrated like my vines, and half as Whereof the reading calls up dangerous spirits;

I rather bring it to the witch." " My book!

You found it " . . . "In the hollow by the stream

That beech leans down into-of which you said,

The Oread in it has a Naiad's heart And pines for waters."

"Thank you."

"Thanks to you, My cousin! that I have seen you not too much

Witch, scholar, poet, dreamer, and the rest.

To be a woman also."

With a glance The smile rose in his eyes again, and touched

The ivy on my forehead, light as air. I answered gravely, "Poets needs must be

Or men or women—-more's the pity." Ah.

But men, and still less women, happily,

Scarce need be poets. Keep to the green wreath,

Since even dreaming of the stone and bronze

Brings headaches, pretty cousin, and defiles

The clean white morning dresses."

"So vou judge! Because I love the beautiful, I must Love pleasure chiefly, and be overcharged

For ease and whiteness! Well-you know the world.

much !-

But learn this: I would rather take Both heart and head,—both active, my part

in white

Yet spread His glory, than keep quiet The world, as head and heart make

And gather up my feet from even a Work man, work woman, since there's

For fear to soil my gown in so much dust.

I choose to walk at all risks.—Here, if heads

That hold a rhythmic thought, must But work for ends, I mean for uses; ache perforce,

For my part, I choose headaches,and to-day's

My birthday.

" Dear Aurora, choose instead To cure them. You have balsams." " I perceive

The headache is too noble for my sex. You think the heartache would sound

decenter. Since that's the woman's special,

proper ache,

And altogether tolerable, except To a woman."

Saying which, I loosed my wreath, And, swinging it beside me as I walked.

Half petulant, half playful, as we walked,

I sent a sidelong look to find his thought,-

As falcon set on falconer's finger may, With sidelong head, and startled,

braving eye, Which means, "You'll see—you'll see! I'll soon take flight-

You shall not hinder." He, as shaking out His hand and answering "Fly then,"

did not speak,

Except by such a gesture. Silently We paced, until, just coming into

Of the house-windows, he abruptly caught

At one end of the swinging wreath, and said

"Aurora!" There I stopped short, breath and all.

"Aurora, let's be serious, and throw

This game of head and heart. Life Has done with keeping birthdays, means, be sure,

both complete.

With God's Dead, who afford to walk And both in earnest. Men and women make

human life.

work to do

In this beleaguered earth, for head and heart.

And thought can never do the work of love!

For such sleek fringes (do you call them ends?

Still less God's glory) as we sew ourselves

Upon the velvet of those baldaquins Held 'twixt us and the sun. That book of yours,

I have not read a page of; but I toss A rose up—it falls calvx down, you see! . . .

The chances are that, being a woman, young,

And pure, with such a pair of large, calm eyes, . . .

You write as well . . . and ill . . . upon the whole,

As other women. If as well, what then?

If even a little better, . . . still, what then?

We want the Best in art now, or no art.

The time is done for facile settings up Of minnow gods, nymphs here, and tritons there:

The polytheists have gone out in God, That unity of Bests. No best, no God !-

And so with art, we say. Give art's divine.

Direct, indubitable, real as grief,— Or leave us to the grief we grow ourselves

Divine by overcoming with mere hope And most prosaic patience. You, you are young

As Eve with nature's daybreak on her face:

But this same world you are come to, dearest coz,

saves her wreaths

To hang upon her ruins,—and for Beside that gate, perhaps. You

To rhyme the cry with which she still A few such cases, and, when strong beats back

her down

To the empty grave of Christ. The Your father were a negro, and your world's hard pressed;

The sweat of labour in the early curse Has (turning acrid in six thousand years)

Become the sweat of torture. Who has time

An hour's time . . . think! . . . to sit upon a bank

And hear the cymbal tinkle in white hands?

When Egypt's slain, I say, let Miriam sing!-

Before . . . where's Moses?"

" Ah-exactly that ! Where's Moses?—is a Moses to be found ?-

You'll seek him vainly in the bulrushes.

While I in vain touch cymbals. Yet, concede.

Such sounding brass has done some actual good

(The application in a woman's hand, If that were credible, being scarcely spoilt,)

In colonising beehives."

"There it is !-You play beside a death-bed like a child.

Yet measure to yourself a prophet's place

To teach the living. None of all these things,

Can women understand. You generalise

Oh, nothing! not even grief! Your quick-breathed hearts,

So sympathetic to the personal pang, "Close on each separate knife-stroke, vielding up

A whole life at each wound : incapable Of deepening, widening a large lap of life

To hold the world-full woe. The human race

To you means, such a child, or such a man,

cold.

gather up

sometimes

Those savage, hungry dogs that hunt | Will write of factories and of slaves as if

A spinner in the mills. All's yours and you,-

All, coloured with your blood, or otherwise

Just nothing to you. Why, I call you hard

general suffering. Here's the world half blind

With intellectual light, half brutalised With civilisation, having caught the plague

In silks from Tarsus, shrieking east and west

Along a thousand railroads, mad with pain

And sin too! . . . does one woman of you all

(You who weep easily) grow pale to

This tiger shake his cage ?--does one of you

Stand still from dancing, stop from stringing pearls,

And pine and die, because of the great Of universal anguish?—Show me a

Wet as Cordelia's, in eyes bright as

yours, Because the world is mad! You can-

not count. That you should weep for this ac-

count, not you! You weep for what you know. A

red-haired child

Sick in a fever, if you touch him once, Though but so little as with a fingertip,

Will set you weeping; but a million sick . . .

You could as soon weep for the rule of three.

Or compound fractions. Therefore, this same world

Uncomprehended by you, must remain

You saw one morning waiting in the Uninfluenced by you.-Women as you are,

Mere women, personal and passionate, You give us doting mothers, and chaste wives,

Sublime Madonnas, and enduring

saints!

We get no Christ from you,—and verily

We shall not get a poet, in my mind."

"With which conclusion you con-

clude." . . . "But this— That you, Aurora, with the large live

brow And steady eyelids, cannot conde-

scend
To play at art, as children play at

swords,
To show a pretty spirit, chiefly ad-

To show a pretty spirit, chiefly admired

Because true action is impossible. You never can be satisfied with

praise Which men give women when they

judge a book Not as mere work, but as mere

Not as mere work, but as mere woman's work,

Expressing the comparative respect Which means the absolute scorn.
'Oh. excellent!

What grace! what facile turns! what fluent sweeps!

What delicate discernment . . . almost thought!

The book does honour to the sex, we hold.

Among our female authors we make room

For this fair writer, and congratu-

The country that produces in these times

Such women, competent to . . . spell.''

"Stop there!"
I answered—burning through his
thread of talk

With a quick flame of emotion,—

"You have read
My soul, if not my book, and argue
well

I would not condescend . . . we will of not say

To such a kind of praise (a worthless end
Is praise of all kinds), but to such a use

Of holy art and golden life. I am young,

And peradventure weak—you tell me so—

Through being a woman. And, for all the rest,

Take thanks for justice. I would rather dance

At fairs on tight-rope, till the babies dropped

Their gingerbread for joy,—than shift the types

For tolerable verse, intolerable

To men who act and suffer. Better far,

Pursue a frivolous trade by serious means,

Than a sublime art frivolously."

"You, Choose nobler work than either, O moist eyes,

And hurrying lips, and heaving heart! We are young,

Aurora, you and I. The world . . . look round . . .

The world, we've come to late, is swollen hard

With perished generations and their sins:

The civiliser's spade grinds horribly
On dead men's bones, and cannot
turn up soil

That's otherwise than fetid. All success

Proves partial failure; all advance implies
What's left behind; all triumph,

something crushed
At the chariot-wheels; all govern-

ment, some wrong:
And rich men make the poor, who

curse the rich,
Who agonise together, rich and poor,
Under and over in the social spasm

Under and over, in the social spasm And crisis of the ages. Here's an age,

That makes its own vocation! here, we have stepped

Across the bounds of time! here's nought to see,

But just the rich man and just Lazarus,

And both in torments; with a mediate gulf,

Though not a hint of Abraham's bosom. Who,

Being man and human, can stand calmly by

And view these things, and never tease his soul

For some great cure? No physic for this grief,

In all the earth and heavens too?" " You believe

In God, for your part ?-ay? that He Who makes,

Can make good things from ill things, best from worst,

As men plant tulips upon dunghills when

They wish them finest?"

"True. A death-heat is The same as life-heat, to be accurate; And in all nature is no death at all, As men account of death, as long as

God

Stands witnessing for life perpetually, By being just God. That's abstract truth, I know,

Philosophy, or sympathy with God: But I, I sympathise with man, not

God.

I think I was a man for chiefly this; And when I stand beside a dying bed, It's death to me. Observe,—it had not much

Consoled the race of mastodons to

Before they went to fossil, that anon Their place should quicken with the elephant;

They were not elephants but mastodons:

And I, a man, as men are now, and

not As men may be hereafter, feel with men

In the agonising present.

"Is it so." I said, "my cousin? is the world so bad,

While I hear nothing of it through the trees?

The world was always evil,—but so bad?

"So bad, Aurora. Dear, my soul is

With poring over the long sum of ill: So much for vice, so much for discontent,

So much for the necessities of power, Accept my reverence."

So much forthe connivances of fear, --Coherent in statistical despairs With such a total of distracted life....

To see it down in figures on a page, Plain, silent, clear . . . as God sees through the earth

The sense of all the graves! . . that's terrible

For one who is not God, and cannot right

The wrong he looks on. May I choose indeed

But vow away my years, my means, my aims, Among the helpers, if there's any

help In such a social strait? The com-

mon blood That swings along my veins, is strong

enough To draw me to this duty."

Then I spoke. "I have not stood long on the strand

of life, And these salt waters have had scarcely time

To creep so high up as to wet my feet, I cannot judge these tides—I shall. perhaps.

A woman's always younger than a

At equal years, because she is disallowed

Maturing by the outdoor sun and air. And kept in long-clothes past the age to walk.

Ah well, I know you men judge other wise!

You think a woman ripens as a peach,-

In the cheeks, chiefly. Pass it to me now: I'm young in age, and younger still, I

think. As a woman. But a child may say

amen To a bishop's prayer and see the way

it goes; And I, incapable to loose the knot

Of social questions, can approve, applaud

August compassion, Christian thoughts that shoot

Beyond the vulgar white of personal

There he glowed on me With all his face and eyes. "No other help?"

aid he-" no more than so?"

"What help?" I asked. You'd scorn my help,—as Nature's self, you say,

las scorned to put her music in my mouth,

lecause a woman's. Do you now turn round

nd ask for what a woman cannot give?"

For what she only can, I turn and

le answered, catching up my hands

and dropping on me from his higheaved brow

"he full weight of his soul,-" I ask for love,

ind that, she can; for life in fellow-

Through bitter duties—that, I know she can;

for wifehood . . . will she?"

"Now," I said, "may God le witness 'twixt us two!" and with the word.

Meseemed I floated into a sudden

bove his stature,—" am I proved too weak

o stand alone, yet strong enough to bear

luch leaners on my shoulder? poor to think, let rich enough to sympathise with

thought? acompetent to sing, as blackbirds

Vet competent to love, like нім? "

I paused: Perhaps I darkened, as the lighthouse will

that turns upon the sea. "It's always so!

Anything does for a wife."

" Aurora, dear, honoured "...he and dearly pressed in at once

With eager utterance,—" you transslate me ill.

do not contradict my thought of As answers even to make a marriage

Which is most reverent, with another thought

Found less so. If your sex is weak for art. (And I who said so, did but honour

vou By using truth in courtship) it is

strong For life and duty. Place your fecund heart

In mine, and let us blossom for the world

That wants love's colour in the grey

of time. With all my talk I can but set you where

You look down coldly on the arenaheaps

Of headless bodies, shapeless, indistinct!

The Judgment-Angelscarce would find his way

Through such a heap of generalised distress,

To the individual man with lips and eves-

Much less Aurora. Ah, my sweet, come down,

And, hand in hand, we'll go where yours shall touch

These victims, one by one! till, one by one.

The formless, nameless trunk of every man Shall seem to wear a head, with hair

you know, And every woman catch your mother's

face

To melt you into passion."

"I am a girl," I answered slowly; "you do well to name

My mother's face. Though far too early, alas,

God's hand did interpose 'twixt it and me.

I know so much of love, as used to shine

In that face and another. Just so much:

No more indeed at all. I have not seen

So much love since, I pray you pardon me,

with,

In this cold land of England. What And, where the Graces walk before vou love.

Isnota woman, Romney, but a cause: You want a helpmate, not a mistress,

A wife to help your ends . . . in her no end!

Your cause is noble, your ends excel-

But I, being most unworthy of these With quiet indignation I broke in. and that.

Do otherwise conceive of love. Farewell."

"Farewell, Aurora? you reject me thus?'

He said.

"Sir, you were married long ago. You have a wife already whom you

Your social theory. Bless you both, I sav.

For my part, I am scarcely meek enough

To be the handmaid of a lawful spouse.

Do I look a Hagar, think you?" "So, you jest!"

"Nay so, I speak in earnest," I replied.

"You treat of marriage too much like, at least, A chief apostle: you would bear

with you

A wife . . . a sister . . . shall we speak it out? A sister of charity.

'Then, must it be Indeed farewell? And was I so far wrong

In hope and in illusion, when I took The woman to be nobler than the man, Yourself the noblest woman,—in the

And comprehension of what love is,—

That generates the likeness of itself Through all heroic duties? so far wrong,

In saying bluntly, venturing truth on love.

*Come, human creature, love and work with me,'-

Instead of, 'Lady, thou art wondrous My father's face for theirs, -and, fair,

the Muse

Will follow at the lighting of their eyes,

And where the Muse walks, lovers need to creep:

Turn round and love me, or I die of love."

"You misconceive the question like a

Who sees a woman as the complement Of his sex merely. You forget too much

That every creature, female as the male,

Stands single in responsible act and thought,

As also in birth and death. Whoever says

To a loyal woman, 'Love and work with me,'

Will get fair answers, if the work and love.

Being good themselves, are good for her-the best She was born for. Women of a

softer mood. Surprised by men when scarcely

awake to life, Will sometimes only hear the first word, love,

And catch up with it any kind of work. Indifferent, so that dear love go with

I do not blame such women, though, for love,

They pick much oakum; earth's fanatics make

Too frequently heaven's saints. But me, your work Is not the best for,—nor your love

the best. Nor able to commend the kind of

work For love's sake merely. Ah, you

force me, sir, To be over-bold in speaking of my-

self,-I, too, have my vocation,—work to do,

The heavens and earth have set me, since I changed

though your world

Were twice as wretched as you repre-

Most serious work, most necessary work,

As any of the economists'. Reform. Make trade a Christian possibility.

And individual right no general wrong:

Wipe out earth's furrows of the Thine and Mine,

And leave one green, for men to play at bowls,

With innings for them all! . . . what then, indeed,

If mortals were not greater by the Than any of their prosperities? what

then, Unless the artist keep up open

roads Betwixt the seen and unseen,-burst-

ing through The best of your conventions with his

best. The speakable, imaginable best

God bids him speak, to prove what

lies beyond Both speech and imagination? A starved man

Exceeds a fat beast: we'll not barter, sir.

The beautiful for barley.—And, even

I hold you will not compass your poor

Of barley-feeding and material ease, Without a poet's individualism

To work your universal. It takes a soul.

To move a body: it takes a high-

souled man, To move the masses . . . even to a The stronger for the distance. If he

cleaner stye: It takes the ideal, to blow a hair'sbreadth off

The dust of the actual.—Ah, your Fouriers failed,

Because not poets enough to understand

That life develops from within.-For me,

Perhaps I am not worthy, as you say, Of work like this! . . . perhaps a woman's soul

Aspires, and not creates! yet we That bear such fruit, are proud to aspire,

And yet I'll try out your perhapses,

And if I fail . . . why, burn me up my straw

Like other false works—I'll not ask for grace.

Your scorn is better, cousin Romney.

Who love my art, would never wish it lower

To suit my stature. I may love my

You'll grant that even a woman may love art.

Seeing that to waste true love on anything,

Is womanly, past question."

The very last word which I said, that day,

As you the creaking of the door, years

Which let upon you such disabling

You ever after have been graver.

His eyes, the motions in his silent mouth, Were fiery points on which my words

were caught, Transfixed for ever in my memory

For his sake, not their own. And yet I know

I did not love him . . . nor he me . . . that's sure . . . And what I said, is unrepented of,

As truth is always. Yet . . . a princely man !-

If hard to me, heroic for himself! He bears down on me through the slanting years,

had loved,

Ay, loved me, with that retributive . face...

I might have been a common woman

And happier, less known and less left alone;

Perhaps a better woman after all,— With chubby children hanging on my neck

To keep me low and wise. Ah me, the vines

stoop with it,

The palm stands upright in a realm of If girls must talk upon their birthsand.

stand upright.

Still worthy of having spoken out the truth.

By being content I spoke it, though it

Him there, me here.-O woman's vile remorse.

To hanker after a mere name, a show, A supposition, a potential love!

Does every man who names love in our lives.

Become a power for that? is love's true thing

So much best to us, that what personates love

Is next best? A potential love, forsooth!

We are not so vile. No, no-he cleaves, I think,

This man, this image, . . . chiefly for the wrong

And shock he gave my life, in finding

Precisely where the devil of my youth Had set me, on those mountainpeaks of hope

All glittering with the dawn-dew, all

And famished for the morning, -saying, while

I looked for empire and much tribute, "Come. I have some worthy work for thee

Come, sweep my barns, and keep my

hospitals,-And I will pay thee with a current

coin

Which men give women."

As we spoke, the grass Was trod in haste beside us, and my

With smile distorted by the sun,face, voice,

As much at issue with the summer-

As if you brought a candle out of doors,-

Broke in with, "Romney, here!-My child, entreat

your talk,

days. Come."

And I, who spoke the truth then, He answered for me calmly, with pale lips That seemed to motion for a smile in

> vain "The talk is ended, madam, where

we stand.

Your brother's daughter has dismissed me here: And all my answer can be better said

Beneath the trees, than wrong by such a word

Your house's hospitalities. Farewell."

With that he vanished. I could hear his heel

Ring bluntly in the lane, as down he leapt The short way from us.-Then, a

measured speech " What means this, Withdrew me. Aurora Leigh?

My brother's daughter has dismissed my suests?'

The lion in me felt the keeper's voice. Through all its quivering dewlaps: I was quelled

Before her,-meekened to the child she knew:

I prayed her pardon, said, "I had little thought To give dismissal to a guest of hers,

In letting go a friend of mine, who came

To take me into service as a wife,-No more than that, indeed."

"No more, no more? Pray Heaven," she answered, "that I was not mad.

I could not mean to tell her to her face That Romney Leigh had asked me for a wife.

And I refused him?"

"Did he ask?" I said; " I think he rather stooped to take me

For certain uses which he found to do For something called a wife. He never asked."

"What stuff!" she answered; " are they queens, these girls?

Your cousin to the house, and have They must have mantles, stitched with twenty silks.

Spread out upon the ground, before An undowered orphan. Child. vour they'll step

One footstep for the noblest lover Of that said mother, disinherited born."

"But I am born," I said with firmness, "I.

To walk another way than his, dear annt."

"You walk, you walk! A babe at thirteen months

Will walk as well as you," she cried in haste.

"Without a steadying finger. Why. you child.

God help you, you are groping in the dark.

For all this sunlight. You suppose. perhaps.

That you, sole offspring of an opulent

Are rich and free to choose a way to

walk? You think, and it's a reasonable

thought, That I besides, being well to do in life. Will leave my handful in my niece's

hand When death shall paralyse these fingers? Pray

Pray, child—albeit I know you love me not .-

As if you loved me, that I may not

For when I die and leave you, out you

(Unless I make room for you in my grave).

Unhoused, unfed, my dear, poor brother's lamb,

(Ah heaven,—that pains!)—without a right to crop

A single blade of grass beneath these trees. Or cast a lamb's small shadow on the

lawn. Unfed, unfolded! Ah, my brother,

here's The fruit you planted in your foreign

loves !-Ay, there's the fruit he planted! never look

Astonished at me with your mother's And wished them redder,—you re-

For it was they, who set you where And now his son who represents our you are.

father's choice

His daughter, his and hers. Men do not think

Of sons and daughters, when they fall in love

So much more than of sisters: otherwise.

He would have paused to ponder what he did.

And shrunk before that clause in the entail

Excluding offspring by a foreign wife (The clause set up a hundred years

By a Leigh who wedded a French dancing-girl

And had his heart danced over in return):

But this man shrunk at nothing, never thought

Of you, Aurora, any more than me-Your mother must have been a pretty thing.

For all the coarse Italian blacks and browns.

To make a good man, which my brother was.

Unchary of the duties to his house; But so it fell indeed. Our Cousin Vane.

Vane Leigh, the father of this Romney, wrote Directly on your birth, to Italy,

'I ask your baby daughter for my

In whom the entail now merges by the

Betroth her to us out of love, instead Of colder reasons, and she shall not lose

By love or law from henceforth '-so he wrote:

A generous cousin was my cousin Vane.

Remember how he drew you to his

The year you came here, just before he died,

And hollowed out his hands to hold your cheeks,

member Vane?

house

And holds the fiefs and manors in his Above book-patterns, which this very

To whom reverts my pittance when I die (Except a few books and a pair of To embrace your orphaned life! fie.

shawls). The boy is generous like him, and

prepared To carry out his kindest word and

thought

To you, Aurora. Yes, a fine young

Is Romney Leigh; although the sun of vouth

Has shone too straight upon his brain,

And fevered him with dreams of doing good

To good-for-nothing people. But a wife

Will put all right, and stroke his temples cool

With healthy touches".

I broke in at that, I could not lift my heavy heart to breathe

Till then, but then I raised it, and it

In broken words like these-" No need to wait.

The dream of doing good to . . . me, at least.

Is ended, without waiting for a wife To cool the fever for him. We've escaped

That danger . . . thank Heaven for

"You." she cried. "Have got a fever. What, I talk and talk

An hour long to you,-I instruct you

You cannot eat or drink or stand or

Or even die, like any decent wretch In all this unroofed and unfurnished world.

Without your cousin, -and you still maintain

There's room 'twixt him and you, for flirting fans

And running knots in eyebrows! You must have

A pattern lover sighing on his knee: You do not count enough a noble heart.

Unclosed itself, in two dear fathers' names.

fie! But stay,

I write a word, and counteract this sin."

She would have turned to leave me. but I clung.

"O sweet my father's sister, hear my word

Before you write yours. Cousin Vane did well.

And cousin Romney well,—and I well

In casting back with all my strength and will

The good they meant me. O my God. my God!

God meant me good, too, when He hindered me

From saying 'Yes' this morning. If vou write

A word, it shall be 'No.' I say 'No. no'

I tie up 'No' upon His altar-herns. Quite out of reach of perjury! At

My soul is not a pauper; I can live At least my soul's life, without alms from men:

And if it must be in heaven instead of earth.

Let heaven look to it,—I am not afraid."

She seized my hands with both hers, strained them fast.

And drew her probing and unscrupulous eves

Right through me, body and heart. "Yet, foolish sweet,

You love this man. I have watched you when he came.

And when he went, and when we've talked of him:

I am not old for nothing; I can tell The weather-signs of love—you love this man."

Girls blush, sometimes, because they are alive.

Half wishing they were dead to save the shame.

The sudden blush devours them, neck | As peradventure she had touched a and brow:

They have drawn too near the fire of life, like gnats,

And flare up bodily, wings and all. What then?

Who's sorry for a gnat . . . or girl ? I blushed.

I feel the brand upon my forehead now

Strike hot; sear deep, as guiltless men may feel

The felon's iron, say, and scorn the

Of what they are not. Most illogical Irrational nature of our womanhood. That blushes one way, feels another wav.

And prays, perhaps, another! After all.

We cannot be the equal of the male, Who rules his blood a little.

For although I blushed indeed, as if I loved the man.

And her incisive smile, accrediting That treason of false witness in my blush,

Did bow me downward like a swathe

of grass Below its level that struck me.-I

attest The conscious skies and all their daily

I think I loved him not . . . nor then, nor since . . .

Nor ever. Do we love the schoolmaster.

Being busy in the woods? much less. being poor.

The overseer of the parish? Do we keep Our love, to pay our debts with?

I grew next moment. As my blood

recoiled From that imputed ignominy, I made My heart great with it. Then, at

last, I spoke,— Spoke veritable words, but passionate, Too passionate perhaps . . . ground up with sobs

To shapeless endings. She let fall my hands,

And took her smile off, in sedate disgust,

snake,-

A dead snake, mind !-- and, turning round, replied,

"We'll leave Îtalian manners, if you please.

I think you had an English father, child.

And ought to find it possible to speak A quiet 'Yes' or 'No' like English girls.

Without convulsions. In another month

We'll take another answer . . . no, or ves."

With that, she left me in the gardenwalk.

I had a father! yes, but long ago— How long it seemed that moment.

Oh, how far, How far and safe, God, dost Thou keep Thy saints

When once gone from us! We may call against

The lighted windows of thy fair Juneheaven

Where all the souls are happy,—and not one.

Not even my father, look from work

To ask, "Who is it that cries after us, Below there, in the dusk?" Yet formerly

He turned his face upon me quick enough,

If I said "Father." Now I might cry loud :

The little lark reached higher with his

Than I with crying. Oh, alone, alone, -Not troubling any in heaven, nor any on earth.

White and cold I stood there in the garden, and looked up

The deaf blue sky that brings the roses out

On such Tune mornings.

You who keep account Of crisis and transition in this life,

Set down the first time Nature says. plain "No"

To some "Yes" in you, and walks over you

In gorgeous sweeps of scorn. We all begin

By singing with the birds, and run- A simple law-clause. If I married ning fast

once, for all,

the sun

Strike down upon us like a friend's sword caught

By an enemy to slay us, while we Not one found honestly deductible

The dear name on the blade which bites at us !-That's bitter and convincing: after

We seldom doubt that something in

the large Smooth order of creation, though no

Than haply a man's footstep, has

gone wrong,

Some tears fell down my cheeks, and then I smiled.

As those smile who have no face in the world

To smile back to them. I had lost a friend

In Romney Leigh; the thing was sure -a friend,

Who had looked at me most gently now and then,

And spoken of my favourite books Farewell, good Romney! if I loved . . . " our books "

With such a voice! Well, voice and I could but ill afford to let you look were now

More utterly shut out from me, I felt, Than even my father's. Romney now was turned

To a benefactor, to a generous man, Who had tied himself to marry . . . me, instead

Of such a woman, with low timorous

He lifted with a sudden word one day. And left, perhaps, for my sake.—Ah, self-tied

contract,-male Iphigenia, bound

At a fatal Aulis, for the winds to change

(But loose him—they'll not change) : he well might seem

A little cold and dominant in love! He had a right to be dogmatical. This poor, good Romney. Love, to bim, was made

him.

With June-days, hand in hand: but I would not dare to call my soul my own, The birds must sing against us, and Which so he had bought and paid for:

every thought

And every heart-beat down there in the bill,-

From any use that pleased him! He might cut

My body into coins to give away

Among his other paupers; change my sons,

While I stood dumb as Griseld, for black babes

Or piteous foundlings; might unquestioned set My right hand teaching in the Ragged

Schools. My left hand washing in the Public

Baths.

What time my angel of the Ideal stretched Both his to me in vain! I could not

claim The poor right of a mouse in a trap, to

squeal. And take so much as pity, from my-

self.

you even,

So generous to me. Farewell, friend. since friend

Betwixt us two, forsooth, must be a word

So heavily overladen. And, since help Must come to me from those who love

me not. Farewell, all helpers—I must help myself,

And am alone from henceforth.—Then I stooped,

And lifted the soiled garland from the ground.

And set it on my head as bitterly As when the Spanish king did crown

the bones Of his dead love. So be it. I pre-

serve That crown still,—in the drawer there! 'twas the first;

The rest are like it;—those Olympian crowns,

We run for, till we lose sight of the sun

In the dust of the racing chariots!

After that

Before the evening fell, I had a note Which ran,—"Aurora, sweet Chaldean, you read

My meaning backward like your Eastern books,

While I am from the West, dear. Read me now

A little plainer. Did you hate me quite

But yesterday? I loved you for my part;

I love you. If I spoke untenderly This morning, my beloved, pardon it:

And comprehend me that I loved you

I set you on the level of my soul,

And overwashed you with the bitter brine

Of some habitual thoughts. Henceforth, my flower,

Be planted out of reach of any such, And lean the side you please, with all your leaves!

Write woman's verses and dream woman's dreams;

But let me feel your perfume in my home,

To make my Sabbath after working-days;

Bloom out your youth beside me,—
be my wife."

I wrote in answer—" We, Chaldeans, discern

Still farther than we read. I know your heart,

And shut it like the holy book it is, Reserved for mild-eyed saints to pore upon

Betwixt their prayers at vespers. Well, you're right,

I did not surely hate you yesterday; And yet I do not love you enough today

To wed you, cousin Romney. Take this word,

And let it stop you as a generous man From speaking farther. You may tease, indeed,

And blow about my feelings, or my leaves,—

And here's my aunt will help you with east winds,

And break a stalk, perhaps, tormenting me;

But certain flowers grow near as deep as trees,

And, cousin, you'll not move my root, not you,

With all your confluent storms. Then let me grow

Within my wayside hedge, and pass your way!

This flower has never as much to say to you

As the antique tomb which said to travellers, 'Pause,'

'Siste, viator.'" Ending thus, I signed.

The next week passed in silence, so the next,

And several after: Romney did not come,

Nor my aunt chide me. I lived on and on,

As if my heart were kept beneath a glass,
And everybody stood, all eyes and

ears,
To see and hear it tick. I could not

Nor walk, nor take a book, nor lay it down,

Nor sew on steadily, nor drop a stitch

And a sigh with it, but I felt her looks Still cleaving to me, like the sucking asp

To Cleopatra's breast, persistently Through the intermittent pantings. Being observed,

When observation is not sympathy, Is just being tortured. If she said a word,

A "Thank you," or an "If it please you, dear,"

She meant a commination, or, at best, An exorcism against the devildom Which plainly held me. So with all the house.

Susannah could not stand and twist my hair,

Without such glancing at the lookingglass To see my face there, that she missed Though still the July air came floatthe plait:

And John,—I never sent my plate for soup.

Or did not send it, but the foolish Tohn Resolved the problem, 'twixt his nap-

kined thumbs,

Of what was signified by taking soup Or choosing mackerel. Neighbours, who dropped in

On morning visits, feeling a joint wrong,

Smiled admonition, sate uneasily, And talked with measured, empha-

sised reserve.

Of parish news, like doctors to the sick.

When not called in,—as if, with leave to speak, They might say something. Nay, the

very dog Would watch me from his sun-patch

on the floor,

In alternation with the large black fly Not yet in reach of snapping. So I lived.

A Roman died so; smeared with honey, teased By insects, stared to torture by the

noon: And many patient souls 'neath Eng-

lish roofs Have died like Romans. I, in look-

ing back. Wish only, now, I had borne the

plague of all With meeker spirits than were rife in

Rome. For, on the sixth week, the dead sea

broke up, Dashed suddenly through beneath the

heel of Him Who stands upon the sea and earth,

and swears Time shall be nevermore. The clock struck nine

That morning, too,—no lark was out

of tune; The hidden farms among the hills,

Their smoke toward heaven: the limetree scarcely stirred

breathed straight

Beneath the blue weight of the cloudless sky.

ing through

The woodbine at my window, in and

With touches of the out-door country news

For a bending forehead. There I sate, and wished

That morning-truce of God would last till eve,

"Sleep," I thought, "late Or longer. sleepers,-sleep,

And spare me yet, the burden of your eyes."

Then, suddenly, a single ghastly shriek

Tore upwards from the bottom of the house.

Like one who wakens in a grave and shrieks.

The still house seemed to shriek itself alive.

And shudder through its passages and stairs

With slam of doors and clash of bells. -I sprang,

I stood up in the middle of the room, And there confronted at my chamberdoor.

A white face,—shivering, ineffectual lips.

"Come, come," they tried to utter, and I went;

As if a ghost had drawn me at the point

Of a fiery finger through the uneven dark.

I went with reeling footsteps down the stair,

Nor asked a question.

There she sate, my aunt,-Bolt upright in the chair beside her bed.

Whose pillow had no dint! she had used no bed

For that night's sleeping . . . yet slept well. My God,

The dumb derision of that grey, peaked face

Concluded something grave against the sun.

Which filled the chamber with its July burst

When Susan drew the curtains, ignoront

Of who sate open-eyed behind her. There. She sate . . . it sate . . . we said

"she" yesterday . . .

And held a letter with unbroken seal. As Susan gave it to her hand last night.

All night she had held it. If its news referred

To duchies or to dunghills, not an inch She'd budge, 'twas obvious, for such

worthless odds:

Nor, though the stars were suns, and overburned

Their spheric limitations, swallowing up Like wax the azure spaces, could they

Those open eyes to wink once. What

last sight

Had left them blank and flat so,drawing out

The faculty of vision from the roots, As nothing more, worth seeing, remained behind?

Were those the eyes that watched me, worried me?

That dogged me up and down the hours and days,

Abeaten, breathless, miserable soul? And did I pray, a half-hour back, but

To escape the burden of those eyes ... those eyes?

"Sleep late" I said.—

Why now, indeed, they sleep. God answers sharp and sudden on some prayers.

And thrusts the thing we have prayed for in our face,

A gauntlet with a gift in't. Every wish

Is like a prayer . . . with God.

I had my wish,-To read and meditate the thing I would.

To fashion all my life upon my thought.

And marry, or not marry. Henceforth, none

Could disapprove me, vex me, hamper Of which the said testatrix dies pos-

Full ground-room, in this desert I say she died possessed of other newly made.

For Babylon or Baalbec,—when the breath,

Now choked with sand, returns, for building towns!

The heir came over on the funeral day,

And we two cousins met before the dead,

With two pale faces. Was it death cr life

That moved us? When the will was read and done,

The official guest and witnesses withdrawn.

We rose up in a silence almost hard, And looked at one another. Then I said.

"Farewell, my cousin."

But he torched, just touched My hatstrings tied for going (at the door

The carriage stood to take me), and said low.

Siste, viator."

" Is there time," I asked. "In these last days of railroads, to stop short

Like Cæsar's chariot (weighing half a ton)

On the Appian road, for morals?"

"There is time," He answered grave, "for necessary words.

Inclusive, trust me, of no epitaph On man or act, my cousin. We have

A will, which gives you all the personal goods

And funded monies of your aunt." " I thank

Her memory for it. With three hundred pounds

We buy in England even, clear standing-room*

To stand and work in. Only two hours since,

I fancied I was poor."

" And, cousin, still You're richer than you fancy. The

will says. Three hundred pounds, and any other sum

sessed.

sums."

"Dear Romney, need we chronicle the pence? I'm richer than I thought—that's

evident.

Enough so."

"Listen rather. You've to do With business and a cousin," he resumed,

"And both, I fear, need patience.

Here's the fact.

The other sum (there is another sum, Unspecified in any will which dates After possession, yet bequeathed as much

And clearly as those said three hundred pounds)

Is thirty thousand. You will have it paid

When?... where? My duty troubles you with words."

He struck the iron when the bar was hot;

No wonder if my eyes sent out some sparks.

"Pause there! I thank you. You are delicate

In glozing gifts;—but I, who share your blood,

And rather made for giving, like yourself,

Than taking, like your pensioners. Farewell."

He stopped me with a gesture of calm pride.

"A Leigh," he said, "gives largesse and gives love,

But glozes neither: if a Leigh could gloze,

He would not do it, moreover, to a Leigh, With blood trained up along nine

centuries
To hound and hate a Re, from eyes

like yours.

And now we'll make the rest as clear:

your aunt
Possessed these monies."

"You will make it clear, My cousin, as the honour of us both, Or one of us speaks vainly—that's not I.

My aunt possessed this sum,—inherited

From whom, and when? bring documents, prove dates,"

"Why now indeed you throw your bonnet off,

As if you had time left for a logarithm! The faith's the want. Dear cousin, give me faith,
And you shall walk this road with

silken shoes.

As clean as any lady of our house

Supposed the proudest. Oh, I comprehend

The whole position from your point

of sight I oust you from your father's halls

and lands, And make you poor by getting rich—

that's law;
Considering which, in common circumstance,

You would not scruple to accept from me

Some compensation, some sufficiency Of income—that were justice; but, alas.

I love you . . . that's mere nature!—
you reject

My love . . . that's nature also;—
and at once,

You cannot, from a suitor disallowed,

A hand thrown back as mine is, into yours
Receive a doit, a farthing, ... not

for the world!
That's etiquette with women, obvi-

ously
Exceeding claim of nature, law, and right,

Unanswerable to all. I grant, you see,

The case as you conceive it,—leave you room
To sweep your ample skirts of

To sweep your ample skirts of womanhood;

While, standing humbly squeezed against the wall,

I own myself excluded from being just,

Restrained from paying indubitable debts,

Because denied from giving you my soul—

That's my misfortune!—I submit to it:

As if, in some more reasonable age, 'Twould not be less inevitable, Enough,

You'll trust me, cousin, as a gentleman.

To keep your honour, as you count it, pure,—

Your scruples (just as if I thought them wise)

Safe and inviolate from gifts of mine."

I answered mild but earnest. "I be-

In no one's honour which another keeps,

Nor man's nor woman's. As I keep, myself,

My truth and my religion, I depute No father, though I had one this side death,

Nor brother, though I had twenty, much less you.

Though twice my cousin, and once Romney Leigh.

To keep my honour pure. You face, to-day,

A man who wants instruction, mark me, not

A woman who wants protection. As to a man,

Show manhood, speak out plainly, be precise

With facts and dates. My aunt inherited

fhis sum, you say—"
" I said she died possessed
Of this, dear cousin."

"Not by heritage.
Thank you: we're getting to the facts
at last.

Perhaps she played at commerce with a ship

Which came in heavy with Australian gold?

Or touched a lottery with her fingerend,

Which tumbled on a sudden into her

Some old Rhine tower or principality? Perhaps she had to do with a marine Sub-transatlantic railroad, which prepays

As well as pre-supposes? or perhaps Some stale ancestral debt was afterpaid

By a hundred years, and took her by surprise?—

You shake your head, my cousin; I guess ill."

"You need not guess, Aurora, nor deride.—

The truth is not afraid of hurting you. You'll find no cause, in all your scruples why

Your aunt should cavil at a deed of

'Twixt her and me."

"I thought so—ah! a gift."

"You naturally thought so," he resumed.

"A very natural gift."

"A gift, a gift! Her individual life being stranded high Above all want, approaching opulence, Too haughty was she to accept a gift Without some ultimate aim: ah, ah, I see.—

A gift intended plainly for her heirs, And so accepted . . . if accepted . . . ah,

Indeed that might be; I am snared perhaps,

Just'so. But, cousin, shall I pardon you,

If thus you have caught me with a cruel springe?"

He answered gently, "Need you tremble and pant

Like a netted lioness? is't my fault, mine, That you're a grand wild creature of

the woods,
And hate the stall built for you? Any

way, Though triply netted, need you glare

at me?
I do not hold the cords of such a net;
You're free from me, Aurora!"

"Now may God Deliver me from this strait! This gift.

of yours
Was tendered . . . when? accepted
. . . . when?" I asked.

"A month . . . a fortnight since?
Six weeks ago

It was not tendered. By a word she dropped,

I know it was not tendered nor received.

When was it? Bring your dates."

"What matters when? A half-hourere she died, or a half-year, Secured the gift, maintains the herit-

age

Inviolable with law. As easy pluck The golden stars from heaven's embroidered stole,

To pin them on the grey side of this earth,

As make you poor again, thank God." " Not poor Nor clean again from henceforth, you

thank God? Well, sir-I ask you . . . I insist at

need, . . .

Vouchsafe the special date, the special date."

"The day before her death-day," he replied,

"The gift was in her hands. We'll find that deed,

And certify that date to you."

As one Who has climbed a mountain-height and carried up

His own heart climbing, panting in his throat

With the toil of the ascent, takes breath at last.

Looks back in triumph—so I stood and looked:

"Dear cousin Romney, we have reached the top

Of this steep question, and may rest. I think.

But first,—I pray you pardon, that Of this sealed letter by a puff of the shock

And surge of natural feeling and event

Had made me oblivious of acquainting you

mark,—still sealed,

hand:

the address,

wrote it clear.-I know your writing, Romney,-recog-

The open-hearted A, the liberal sweep Of the G. Now listen,—let us understand:

You will not find that famous deed of

Unless you find it in the letter here. Which, not being mine, I give you back.—Refuse

To take the letter? well then-you and I.

As writer and as heiress, open it Together, by your leave.—Exactly so: The words in which the noble offering's made,

Are nobler still, my cousin; and, I

The proudest and most delicate heart alive,

Distracted from the measure of the By such a grace in giving, might

accept Your largesse without thinking any

more Of the burthen of it, than King Solomon

Considered, when he wore his holy ring Charáctered over with the ineffable spell,

How many carats of fine gold made up Its money-value. So, Leigh gives to Leigh-

Or rather, might have given, observe! -for that's

The point we come to. Here's a proof of gift,

But here's no proof, sir, of acceptancy, But rather, disproof. Death's black dust, being blown,

Infiltrated through every secret fold fate.

Dried up for ever the fresh-written ink, Annulled the gift, disutilised the grace, And left these fragments."

As I spoke, I tore That this, this letter . . . unread, The paper up and down, and down and up

Was found enfolded in the poor dead And crosswise, till it fluttered from my hands.

That spirit of hers had gone beyond As forest-leaves, stripped suddenly and rapt Which could not find her though you By a whirlwind on Valdarno, drop

again, Drop slow, and strew the melancholy

ground Before the amazed hills . . . why, so,

indeed. I'm writing like a poet, somewhat

In the type of the image,—and exaggerate

A small thing with a great thing, topping it !-

But then I'm thinking how his eyes looked . . . his,
With what despondent and surprised

reproach!

I think the tears were in them, as he looked—

I think the manly mouth just trembled. Then

He broke the silence.

"I may ask, perhaps, Although no stranger . . . only Romney Leigh,

Which means still less . . . than Vincent Carrington . . .

Your plans in going hence, and where you go.

This cannot be a secret."

"All my life
Is open to you, cousin. I go hence
To London, to the gathering-place of
souls,

To live mine straight out, vocally, in books;

Harmoniously for others, if indeed A woman's soul, like man's, be wide enough

To carry the whole octave (that's to prove)

Or, if I fail, still, purely for myself. Pray God be with me, Romney."

"Ah, poor child, Who fight against the mother's 'tiring hand,

And choose the headsman's! May God change His world

For your sake, sweet, and make it mild as heaven,

And juster than I have found you!"

But I paused.

"And you, my cousin?"

"I," he said,—" you ask?
You care to ask? Well, girls have
curious minds,

And fain would know the end of everything,

Of cousins, therefore, with the rest. For me,

Aurora, I've my work; you know my work;

And, having missed this year some personal hope.

I must beware the rather that I miss No reasonable duty. While you sing

Your happy pastorals of the meads and trees,

Bethink you that I go to impress and prove

On stifled brains and deafened ears, stunned deaf,

Crushed dull with grief, that nature sings itself,

And needs no mediate poet, lute or voice,

To make it vocal. While you ask of men

Your audience, I may get their leave perhaps

For hungry orphans to say audibly 'We're hungry, see,'—for beaten and bullied wives

To hold their unweaned babies up in sight,

Whom orphanage would better; and for all

To speak and claim their portion . . . by no means

Of the soil, . . . but of the sweat in tilling it,—
Since this is now a demand.

Since this is now-a-days turned privilege,
To have only God's curse on us, and

not man's.

Such work I have for doing, elbow-

deep
In social problems,—as you tie your

rhymes,
To draw my uses to cohere with

needs,
And bring the uneven world back to
its round;

Or, failing so much, fill up, bridge at least

To smoother issues, some abysmal cracks

And feuds of earth, intestine heats have made

To keep men separate,—using sorry shifts
Of hospitals, almshouses infant

Of hospitals, almshouses, infant schools, And other practical stuff of partial

good,

You lovers of the beautiful and whole, Despise by system."

" I despise? The scorn
Is yours, my cousin. Poets become
such,

Through scorning nothing. You decry them for

The good of beauty, sung and taught by them,

While they respect your practical For 'tis not in mere death that men partial good

As being a part of beauty's self. And, after our first girding of the loins Adieu!

When God helps all the workers for His world.

The singers shall have help of Him, not last."

He smiled as men smile when they will not speak

Because of something bitter in the thought:

And still I feel his melancholy eyes Look judgment on me. It is seven vears since:

I know not if 'twas pity or 'twas scorn Has made them so far-reaching: judge it ye

Who have had to do with pity more than love,

And scorn than hatred. I am used, since then,

To other ways, from equal men. But

Even so, we let go hands, my cousin and I.

And, in between us, rushed the torrent-

To blanch our faces like divided rocks. And bar for ever mutual sight and

Except through swirl of spray and all that roar.

THIRD BOOK

"To-DAY thou girdest up thy loins thyself,

And goest where thou wouldest: presently

Others shall gird thee," said the Lord, " to go Where thou would'st not." He spoke

to Peter thus.

To signify the death which he should die When crucified head downwards.

If He spoke To Peter then, He speaks to us the same;

The word suits many different martyrdoms.

And signifies a multiform of death, Although we scarcely die apostles, we, And have mislaid the keys of heaven and earth.

die most;

In youth's fine linen and fair broidery. To run up hill and meet the rising sun. We are apt to sit tired, patient as a

While others gird us with the violent bands

Of social figments, feints, and formalisms.

Reversing our straight nature, lifting Our base needs, keeping down our

lofty thoughts, Head downward on the cross-sticks of

the world.

Yet He can pluck us from that shameful cross. God, set our feet low and our forehead

high, And show us how a man was made to walk!

Leave the lamp, Susan, and go up to

The room does very well: I have to write

Beyond the stroke of midnight. Get away:

Your steps, for ever buzzing in the room.

Tease me like gnats. Ah, letters! throw them down At once, as I must have them, to be

sure, Whether I bid you never bring me

such At such an hour, or bid you. No

excuse. You choose to bring them, as I choose perhaps

To throw them in the fire. Now, get to bed.

And dream, if possible, I am not cross.

Why what a pettish, petty thing I grow,-

A mere, mere woman,—a mere flaccid nerve,-

A kerchief left out all night in the rain. Turned soft so, - overtasked and overstrained

And overlived in this close London

And yet I should be stronger.

Never burn Your letters, poor Aurora! for they

With red seals from the table, saying each.

"Here's something that you know not." Out alas.

Tis scarcely that the world's more

good and wise Or even straighter and more conse-

quent Since yesterday at this time-yet,

again,

If but one angel spoke from Ararat, should be very sorry not to hear: so open all the letters! let me read. Blanche Ord, the writer in the "Lady's Fan,"

Requests my judgment on . . . that, afterwards.

Kate Ward desires the model of my

And signs, "Elisha to you." Pringle Sharpe

Presents his work on "Social Conduct," . . . craves

A little money for his pressing debts . .

From me, who scarce have money for my needs,-

Art's fiery chariot which we journey in Being apt to singe our singing-robes to holes.

Although you ask me for my cloak, Kate Ward!

Here's Rudgely knows it—editor and scribe.-

He's forced to marry where his heart

Because the purse lacks where he lost his heart.

Ah,—lost it because no one picked it Get up, be merry, shout, and clap your up! That's really loss! (and passable im-

pudence.) My critic Hammond flatters prettily,

And wants another volume like the My critic Belfair wants another book

Entirely different, which will sell (and live?), A striking book, yet not a startling

book, The public blames originalities

You must not pump spring-water unawares

Upon a gracious public, full of nerves-)

Good things, not subtle, new yet orthodox.

As easy reading as the dog-eared page That's fingered by said public, fifty years,

Since first taught spelling by its grandmother.

And yet a revelation in some sort: That's hard, my critic Belfair! Sowhat next?

My critic Stokes objects to abstract

thoughts:

"Call a man, John, a woman, Joan," savs he.

" And do not prate so of humanities:" Whereat I call my critic, simply Stokes.

My critic Jobson recommends more mirth.

Because a cheerful genius suits the times,

And all true poets laugh unquenchably

Like Shakspeare and the gods. That's very hard.

The gods may laugh, and Shakspeare; Dante smiled

With such a needy heart on two pale

We cry, "Weep rather, Dante." Poems are

Men, if true poems: and who dares exclaim

At any man's door, "Here, 'tis probable The thunder fell last week, and killed

a wife, And scared a sickly husband-what

of that?

hands,

Because a cheerful genius suits the times—"? None says so to the man,—and why

indeed

Should any to the poem? A ninth seal;

The apocalypse is drawing to a close. Ha,—this from Vincent Carrington,— " Dear friend,

I want good counsel. Will you lend me wings

To raise me to the subject, in a sketch

eleven?

A poet's only born to turn to use; Carrington."

Romney Leigh,

Beyond what's said of him in newspapers,

His phalansteries there, his speeches

His pamphlets, pleas, and statements. everywhere?

He dropped me long ago; but no one drops

A golden apple—though indeed, one

You hinted that, but jested. Well, at least.

You know Lord Howe, who sees him ... whom he sees.

And you see, and I hate to see, -for

Standshigh upon the brink of theories, Observes the swimmers, and cries ' Very fine,

But keeps dry linen equally,-unlike gallant breaster, Romney. Strange it is,

Such sudden madness seizing a young

To make earth over again,—while I'm content

To make the pictures. Let me bring the sketch.

A tiptoe Danae, overbold and hot; Both arms a-flame to meet her wishing Tove

Halfway, and burn him faster down; the face

And breasts upturned and straining, the loose locks

All glowing with the anticipated gold. Or here's another on the self-same theme.

She lies here—flat upon her prisonfloor.

The long hair swathed about her to the heel.

Like wet sea-weed. You dimly see her through

The glittering haze of that prodigious

Half blotted out of nature by a love As heavy as fate. I'll bring you either sketch.

I'll bring to-morrow-may I? at I think, myself, the second indicates More passion."

Surely. Self is put away. So save you! for the world . . . and And calm with, abdication. She is Tove.

"(Writ after.) Have you heard of And no more Danae-greater thus. Perhaps

The painter symbolises unawares

Two states of the recipient artistsoul: One, forward, personal, wanting rever-

ence. Because aspiring only. We'll be calm,

And know that, when indeed our Joves come down,

We all turn stiller than we have ever

Kind Vincent Carrington. I'll let him

He talks of Florence,—and may say a

Of something as it chanced seven years ago .-

A hedgehog in the path, or a lame

In those green country walks, in that good time, When certainly I was so miserable . . .

I seem to have missed a blessing ever since.

The music soars within the little lark, And the lark soars. It is not thus with men.

We do not make our places with our strains,-

Content, while they rise, to remain behind.

Alone on earth instead of so in heaven. No matter—I bear on my broken tale.

When Romney Leigh and I had parted thus.

I took a chamber up three flights of stairs

Not far from being as steep as some larks climb,

And, in a certain house in Kensington. Three years I lived and worked. Get leave to work

In this world,—'tis the best you get at all:

For God, in cursing, gives us better gifts

Than men in benediction. God says, "Sweat

For foreheads: "men sav "crowns:" and so we are crowned .-

Av, gashed by some tormenting circle of steel

Which snaps with a secret spring. Get work, get work;

Be sure 'tis better than what you work to get.

Serene and unafraid of solitude.

I worked the short days out, -and watched the sun

On lurid morns or monstrous afternoons,

Like some Druidic idol's fiery brass. With fixed unflickering outline of dead heat.

In which the blood of wretches pent inside

Seemed oozing forth to incarnadine the air,—

Push out through fog with his dilated

And startle the slant roofs and chimnev-pots

With splashes of fierce colour. Or I

Fog only, the great tawny weltering

Involve the passive city, strangle

Alive, and draw it off into the void. Spires, bridges, streets, and squares, as if a sponge

Had wiped out London,-or as noon and night

Had clapped together and utterly struck out

The intermediate time, undoing them-

In the act. Your city poets see such things,

Not despicable. Mountains of the south.

When, drunk and mad with elemental wines,

They rend the seamless mist and stand up bare,

Make fewer singers, haply. No one sings,

Descending Sinai: on Parnassus mount.

You take a mule to climb, and not a

chant

Their anthems to themselves, and leave vou dumb.

But sit in London, at the day's decline, And view the city perish in the mist Like Pharach's armaments in the deep

Red Sea.-The chariots, horsemen, footmen, all

the host. Sucked down and choked to silence-

then, surprised

By a sudden sense of vision and of tune,

You feel as conquerors though you did not fight.

And you and Israel's other singing girls.

Ay, Miriam with them, sing the song you choose.

I worked with patience which means almost power.

I did some excellent things indifferently.

Some bad things excellently. Both were praised,

The latter loudest. And by such a time

That I myself had set them down as

Scarce worth the price of sackcloth, week by week, Arrived some letter through the

sedulous post, Like these I've read, and yet dissimi-

With pretty maiden seals,—initials twined

Of lilies or a heart marked Emily (Convicting Emily of being all heart); Or rarer tokens from young bachelors, Who wrote from college (with the same

goosequill, Suppose, they had just been plucked of) and a snatch

From Horace, "Collegisse juvat," set Upon the first page. Many a letter signed

Or unsigned, showing the writers at eighteen

Had lived toolong, though every muse should help

The daylight, holding candles,—compliments.

Except in fable and figure: forests To smile or sigh at. Such could pass with me

No more than coins from Moscow circulate

At Paris. Would ten roubles buy a tag

Of ribbon on the boulevard, worth a sou?

I smiled that all this youth should love me,—sighed

That such a love could scarcely raise them up

To love what was more worthy than myself;

Then sighed again, again, less generously,

To think the very love they lavished so,

Proved me inferior. The strong loved me not,

And he . . . my cousin Romney . . . did not write.

I felt the silent finger of his scorn

Prick every bubble of my frivolous My steps out through the slow and fame difficult road.

As my breath blew it, and resolve it back

To the air it came from. Oh, I justi-

The measure he had taken of my height:

The thing was plain—he was not wrong a line;

I played at art, made thrusts with a toy-sword,

Amused the lads and maidens.

Came a sigh
Deep, hoarse with resolution,—I
would work

To better ends, or play in earnest. "Heavens,

I think I should be almost popular If this went on!"—I ripped my verses up.

And found no blood upon the rapier's point:

The heart in them was just an embryo's heart,

Which never yet had beat, that it should die;

Just gasps of make-believe galvanic life;
Mere tones, inorganised to any tune.

And yet I felt it in me where it burnt, Like those hot fire-seeds of creation held In Jove's clenched palm before the worlds were sown,—

But I—I was not Juno even! my hand
Wasshut in weak convulsion, woman's

ill, And when I yearned to loose a finger

—lo,
The nerve revolted. 'Tis the same

even now: This hand may never, haply, open

large,
Before the spark is quenched, or the

palm charred,
To prove the power not else than by

the pain.

It burns, it burnt—my whole life

burnt with it,
And light, not sunlight and not torch-

light, flashed

My steps out through the slow and

difficult road.

I had grown distrustful of too forward
Springs.

The season's books in drear significance Of morals, dropping round me. Lively books?

The ash has livelier verdure than the yew;

And yet the yew's green longer, and alone

Found worthy of the holy Christmas time.

We'll plant more yews if possible, albeit

We plant the graveyards with them.

Day and night

I worked my rhythmic thought, and furrowed up Both watch and slumber with long

lines of life Which did not suit their season. The

rose fell From either cheek, my eyes globed

luminous
Through orbits of blue shadow, and

my pulse
Would shudder along the purpleveinèd wrist

Like a shot bird. Youth's stern, set face to face

With youth's ideal: and when people came

And said, "You work too much, you are looking ill,"

I smiled for pity of them who pitied

And thought I should be better soon perhaps

For those ill looks. Observe-"I" means in youth

Just $I \dots$ the conscious and eternal soul

With all its ends, and not the outside life.

The parcel-man, the doublet of the flesh,

The so much liver, lung, integument, Which make the sum of "I" hereafter, when

World-talkers talk of doing well or

I prosper, if I gain a step, although A nail then pierced my foot: although my brain

Embracing any truth, froze paralysed, I prosper. I but change my instrument:

I break the spade off, digging deep for gold,

And catch the mattock up.

I worked on, on. Through all the bristling fence of nights and days

Which hedges time in from the eterni-

I struggled, . . . never stopped to note the stakes

Which hurt me in my course. The midnight oil

Would stink sometimes; there came some vulgar needs:

I had to live, that therefore I might work,

And, being but poor, I was constrained, for life.

To work with one hand for the booksellers.

While working with the other for myself

And art. You swim with feet as well as hands.

Or make small way. I apprehended The academic law convinced of this.-

In England, no one lives by verse that The critics cried out on the falling off,

And, apprehending, I resolved by My heart's life throbbing in my verse prose

To make a space to sphere my living

I wrote for cyclopædias, magazines,

And weekly papers, holding up my name

To keep it from the mud: I learnt the use

Of the editorial "we" in a review, As courtly ladies the fine trick of trains.

And swept it grandly through the open doors

As if one could not pass through doors

Save so encumbered. I wrote tales beside,

Carved many an article on cherrystones

To suit light readers, -something in the lines

Revealing, it was said, the mallethand.

But that, I'll never youch for. What you do

For bread, will taste of common grain, not grapes,

Although you have a vineyard in Champagne,-

Much less in Nephelococcygia,

As mine was, peradventure.

Having bread For just so many days, just breathing room

For body and verse, I stood up straight and worked

My veritable work. And as the soul Which grows within a child, makes the child grow,-

Or as the fiery sap, the touch from

Careering through a tree, dilates the

And roughs with scale and knob, before it strikes

The summer foliage out in a green

So life, in deepening with me, deepened

The course I took, the work I did. Indeed.

sin:

Regretting the first manner. But I felt

to show It lived, it also-certes, incomplete, Disordered with all Adam in the

blood,

But even its very tumours, warts, and | The steep stair somewhat justified.

Still organised by, and implying life.

A lady called upon me on such a day. She had the low voice of your English dames.

Unused, it seems, to need rise half a note To catch attention,—and their quiet

As if they lived too high above the earth

For that to put them out in anything: So gentle, because verily so proud; So wary and afeared of hurting you, By no means that you are not really vile,

But that they would not touch you

with their foot To push you to your place; so self-

possessed Yet gracious and conciliating, it takes An effort in their presence to speak

truth: You know the sort of woman, -brilliant stuff,

And out of nature. "Lady Waldemar.

She said her name quite simply, as if it meant

Not much indeed, but something,took my hands,

And smiled, as if her smile could help

my case, And dropped her eyes on me, and let them melt.

"Is this," she said, "the Muse?"
"No sybil even,"

I answered, "since she fails to guess the cause

Which taxed you with this visit. madam.

"Good," She said, "I like to be sincere at once; Perhaps, if I had found a literal Muse, The visit might have taxed me. As it is.

You wear your blue so chiefly in your eyes,

My fair Aurora, in a frank good way, It comforts me entirely for your fame, As well as for the trouble of my ascent To this Olympus.'

There, a silver laugh Ran rippling through her quickened little breaths

" But still

Your ladyship has left me curious why You dared the risk of finding the said Muse?"

"Ah.-keep me, notwithstanding, to the point,

Like any pedant? Is the blue in eyes As awful as in stockings, after all, I wonder, that you'd have my business

Before I breathe—exact the epic plunge

Inspite of gasps? Well, naturally you think

I've come here, as the lion-hunters go To deserts, to secure you, with a trap, For exhibition in my drawing-rooms On zoologic soirées? Not in the least.

Roar softly at me; I am frivolous, I dare say; I have played at lions, too, Like other women of my class,—but now

I meet my lion simply as Androcles Met his . . . when at his mercy."

So, she bent Her head, as queens may mock,—then lifting up

Her eyelids with a real grave queenly look,

Which ruled, and would not spare, not even herself,-

"I think you have a cousin :- Romney Leigh."

"You bring a word from him?"my eyes leapt up

To the very height of hers,—" a word from him?"

"I bring a word about him, actually. But first,"—she pressed me with her urgent eyes-

"You do not love him, -you?" "You're frank at least In putting questions, madam," I

replied; "I love my cousin cousinly—no more."

"I guessed as much. I'm ready to be frank

In answering also, if you'll question

Or even with something less. You' stand outside.

You artist women, of the common sex:

Perhaps by what you're mulcted in, So like a Leigh! so like him!—Pardon your hearts

Being starved to make your heads: I am well aware I do not derogate so run the old

Traditions of you. I can therefore speak.

Without the natural shame which creatures feel

When speaking on their level, to their

There's many a papist she, would rather die

Than own to her maid she put a ribbon on

To catch the indifferent eye of such a man,-

Who yet would count adulteries on her beads

At holy Mary's shrine, and never blush:

Because the saints are so far off, we lose

All modesty before them. Thus, todav.

'Tis I, love Romney Leigh."

"Forbear," I cried. "If here's no Muse, still less is any saint:

Nor even a friend, that Lady Walde-

Should make confessions " . . .

"That's unkindly said. If no friend, what forbids to make a friend

To join to our confession ere we have From flying over,—we're as natural

I love your cousin. If it seems un-

To say so, it's still foolisher (we're frank)

To feel so. My first husband left me young.

And pretty enough, so please you, and rich enough,

To keep my booth in Mayfair with the rest

To happy issues. There are marquises Would serve seven years to call me wife, I know:

And, after seven, I might consider it, For there's some comfort in a marquisate

seven years;

You share not with us, and exceed us I, now, love Romney. You put up vour lip.

In loving Romney Leigh. The name is good,

The means are excellent; but the man, the man-

Heaven help us both.—I am near as mad as he.

In loving such an one."

She slowly swung Her heavy ringlets till they touched her smile,

As reasonably sorry for herself; And thus continued,-

" Of a truth, Miss Leigh, I have not, without struggle, come to

I took a master in the German tongue, I gamed a little, went to Paris twice: But, after all, this love! . . . you eat of love,

And do as vile a thing as if you ate Of garlic-which, whatever else you

Tastes uniformly acrid, till your peach Reminds you of your onion. Am I coarse?

Well, love's coarse, nature's coarseah, there's the rub!

We fair fine ladies, who park out our lives

From common sheep-paths, cannot ! help the crows

As Blowsalinda. Drape us perfectly In Lyons velvet,—we are not, for that.

Lay-figures, look you! we have hearts within.

Warm, live, improvident, indecent hearts.

As ready for distracted ends and acts As any distressed sempstress of them

That Romney groans and toils for. We catch love

And other fevers, in the vulgar way. Love will not be outwitted by our wit,

Nor outrun by our equipages :- mine When all's said,—yes, but after the Persisted, spite of efforts. All my cards

Turned up but Romney Leigh; my German stopped

At germane Wertherism; my Paris rounds

Returned me from the Champs Elysées just

A ghost, and sighing like Dido's. I came home

Uncured,—convicted rather to myself Of being in love . . . in love! That's coarse you'll say.

I'm talking garlic.

Coldly I replied. "Apologise for atheism, not love! For me, I do believe in love, and God. I know my cousin: Lady Waldemar I know not: yet I say as much as this-Whoever loves him, let her not excuse But cleanse herself, that, loving such We'll take, say, that most perfect of a man.

She may not do it with such unworthy love

He cannot stoop and take it."

"That is said Austerely, like a youthful prophetess, Who knits her brows across her pretty

To keep them back from following the grey flight

Of doves between the temple-columns. Dear,

Be kinder with me. Let us two be friends.

I'm a mere woman,—the more weak perhaps

Through being so proud; you're better; as for him,

He's best. Indeed he builds his goodness up

So high, it topples down to the other side,

And makes a sort of badness; there's the worst

I have to say against your cousin's best!

And so be mild, Aurora, with my worst.

For his sake, if not mine."

" I own myself Incredulous of confidence like this Availing him or you."

"And I myself Of being worthy of him with any love. In your sense I am not so-let it pass. And yet I save him if I marry him; Let that pass too.'

" Pass, pass! we play police Upon my cousin's life, to indicate What may or may not pass?" I cried.

" He knows

What's worthy of him; the choice remains with him;

And what he chooses, act or wife, I think

I shall not call unworthy, I, for one."

"'Tis somewhat rashly said," she answered slow.

"Now let's talk reason, though we talk of love.

Your cousin Romney Leigh's a monster; there,

The word's out fairly; let me prove the fact.

antiques.

They call the 'Genius' of the Vatican. Which seems too beauteous to endure itself

In this mixed world, and fasten it for

Upon the torso of the 'Drunken Faun' (Who might limp surely, if he did not dance),

Instead of Buonarotti's mask: what then?

We show the sort of monster Romney

With godlike virtues and heroic aims Subjoined to limping possibilities

Of mismade human nature. Grant the man

Twice godlike, twice heroic,—still he And here's the point we come to."

" Pardon me,

But, Lady Waldemar, the point's the thing

We never come to.

" Caustic, insolent At need! I like you "-(there, she took my hands)

" And now my lioness, help Androcles, For all your roaring. Help me! for myself

I would not say so—but for him. He limps

So certainly, he'll fall into the pit A week hence,—so I lose him—so he is lost!

And when he's fairly married, he a Leigh,

To a girl of doubtful life, undoubtful birth.

Starved out in London, till her coarsegrained hands

Are whiter than her morals,—you, for

May call his choice most worthy." " Married! lost!

He . . . Romney! 'Ah, you're moved at last," she

"These monsters, set out in the open

Of course throw monstrous shadows: those who think

Awry, will scarce act straightly. Who but he?

And who but you can wonder? He has been mad.

The whole world knows, since first, a nominal man,

He soured the proctors, tried the gownsmen's wits,

With equal scorn of triangles and

And took no honours, yet was honourable.

They'll tell you he lost count of Homer's ships

In Melbourne's Poor-Bills, Ashley's Factory Bills,-

Ignored the Aspasia we all dare to praise,

For other women, dear, we could not Because we're decent. Well, he had

some right On his side probably; men always

Who go absurdly wrong. The living

boor, Who brews your ale, exceeds in vital

worth Dead Cæsar who 'stops bungholes 'in ! the cask:

And also, to do good is excellent, For persons of his income, even to boors:

I sympathise with all such things. But

Went mad upon them . . . madder To a saner man than he, whene'er we and more mad,

From college times to these,—as, going (For which I dodged occasion)—learnt down hill,

know

Your Leigh by heart: he has sown his black young curls

With bleaching cares of half a million

Already. If you do not starve, or sin, You're nothing to him. Pay the income-tax,

And break your heart upon 't . . . he'll scarce be touched;

But come upon the parish, qualified For the parish stocks, and Romney will be there

To call you brother, sister, or perhaps A tenderer name still. Had I any chance

With Mister Leigh, who am Lady Waldemar.

And never committed felony?"

"You speak Too bitterly," I said, "for the literal truth.'

"The truth is bitter. Here's a man who looks

For ever on the ground ! you must be low:

Or else a pictured ceiling overhead, Good painting thrown away. For me, I've done

What women may (we're somewhat limited, We modest women), but I've done my

best. —How men are perjured when they

swear our eyes Have meaning in them! they're just

blue or brown.-They just can drop their lids a little.

In fact. Mine did more, for I read half Fourier

through, Proudhon, Considerant, and Louis

Blanc. With various others of his socialists:

And if I had been a fathom less in love. Had cured myself with gaping. As it

I quoted from them prettily enough, Perhaps, to make them sound half rational

talked,

by heart

The faster still, the farther! you must His speeches in the Commons and elsewhere

Upon the social question; heaped reports

Of wicked women and penitentiaries, On all my tables, with a place for Sue; And gave my name to swell subscription-lists

in heaven,

I did,

wearing gowns

Provided by the Ten Hours' movement! there,

I stopped—we must stop somewhere. He, meanwhile,

Unmoved as the Indian tortoise You're at the difficult point, the join. 'neath the world,

Let all that noise go on upon his back: out:

'Twas well to see a woman of my class (Except the class), yet marry and With such a dawn of conscience. For the heart,

ing up

feet at it:

But deigned to let my carriage stop This virtuous act must have a patent him short

In park or street,—he leaning on the

With news of the committee which sate last

On pickpockets at suck."

"You jest-you jest."

"As martyrs jest, dear (if you've read their lives), Upon the axe which kills them. When

all's done

By me, . . . for him-you'll ask him presently

The colour of my hair—he cannot tell, Or answers 'dark' at random,while, be sure,

He's absolute on the figure, five or ten, Of my last subscription. Is it bearable,

And I a woman?

" Is it reparable,

Though I were a man?"

'I know not. That's to prove. But, first, this shameful marriage."

"Then really there's a marriage?"

"Yesterday I held him fast upon it. 'Mister Leigh.

Said I, 'shut up a thing, it make. more noise.

The boiling town keeps secrets ill: I've known

Toward keeping up the sun at nights Yours since last week. Forgive my knowledge so:

And other possible ends. All things You feel I'm not the woman of the world

Except the impossible . . . such as The world thinks; you have borne with me before, And used me in your noble work,

our work,

And now you shall not cast me off because

'Tis true

Even I can scarce admit the cogency He would not disconcert or throw me Of such a marriage . . . where you do not love

throw your name

Down to the gutter, for a fire-escape Made firewood for his sake, and flam- To future generations! it's sublime, A great example,—a true Genesis To his very face . . . he warmed his Of the opening social era. heed:

weight.

Or loses half its virtue. Make it tell. Interpret it, and set in the light,

And do not muffle it in a wintercloak

As a vulgar bit of shame,—as if, at best.

A Leigh had made a misalliance and blushed

A Howard should know it. pressed him more-

'He would not choose,' I said, 'that even his kin, . . .

Leigh, even . . . should conceive his act

Less sacrifice, more appetite.' At which

He grew so pale, dear, . . . to the lips, I knew

I had touched him. 'Do you know her,' he inquired,

'My cousin Aurora?' 'Yes,' I said, and lied

(But truly we all know you by your books),

"Ay?" I cried, And so I offered to come straight to you,

Explain the subject, justify the cause, And take you with me to St. Margaret's Court

To see this miracle, this Marian Erle. This drover's daughter (she's not

pretty, he swears)

Upon whose finger, exquisitely pricked By a hundred needles, we're to hang

Twixt class and class in England, thus, is deed,

By such a presence, yours and mine, to lift

The match up from the doubtful place. At once

He thanked me, sighing ... murmured to himself,

'She'll do it perhaps; she's noble,'thanked me twice,

And promised, as my guerdon, to put

His marriage for a month."

I answered then. "I understand your drift imperfectly. You wish to lead me to my cousin's betrothed,

To touch her hand if worthy, and hold her hand

If feeble, thus to justify his match. So be it then. But how this serves

your ends, And how the strange confession of your love

Serves this, I have to learn-I cannot see."

She knit her restlessforehead. "Then, despite,

Aurora, that most radiant morning

You're dull as any London afternoon. I wanted time,—and gained it,wanted you,

And gain you! You will come and see the girl,

In whose most prodigal eyes, the lineal pearl And pride of all your lofty race of

Leighs Is destined to solution. Authorised By sight and knowledge, then, you'll

speak your mind, And prove to Romney, in your brilliant way,

He'll wrong the people and posterity

(Saysuch a thing is bad for you and me. And you fail utterly,) by concluding thus

An execrable marriage. Break it up, Disroot it-peradventure, presently, We'll plant a better fortune in its place.

Be good to me, Aurora, scorn me less For saying the thing I should not. Well I know

I should not. I have kept as others have,

The iron rule of womanly reserve In lip and life, till now: I wept a week

Before I came here."—Ending, she was pale;

The last words, haughtily said, were tremulous.

This palfrey pranced in harness, arched her neck,

And, only by the foam upon the bit, You saw she champed against it. Then I rose.

"I love love: truth's no cleaner thing than love.

I comprehend a love so fiery hot

It burns its natural veil of august shame,

And stands sublimely in the nude, as chaste As Medicean Venus. But I know,

A love that burns through veils, will burn through masks,

And shrivel up treachery. What, love and lie!

Nav-go to the opera! your love's curable."

"I love and lie?" she said—"I lie, forsooth?"

And beat her taper foot upon the floor, And smiled against the shoe .-"You're hard, Miss Leigh,

current phrases.— Unversed in Bowling-greens

Of poets are fresher than the world's highways;

Forgive me that I rashly blew the dust Which dims our hedges even, in your eyes,

And vexed you so much. You find, probably,

No evil in this marriage,—rather good Of innocence, to pastoralise in song: You'll give the bond your signature. perhaps,

Beneath the lady's mark, —indifferent | Eterne, intense, profuse, —still throw That Romney chose a wife, could write her name,

In witnessing he loved her."

"Loved!" I cried; "Who tells you that he wants a wife to love

He gets a horse to use, not love, I

There's work for wives as well,—and after, straw,

When men are liberal. For myself, you err

Supposing power in me to break this match.

I could not do it, to save Romney's life:

And would not, to save mine."

"You take it so," She said: "farewell then. Write your books in peace,

As far as may be for some secret stir Now obvious to me, -for, most obviously.

In coming hither I mistook the way." Whereat she touched my hand, and bent her head,

And floated from me like a silent Cursed at a window, both ways, in cloud

That leaves the sense of thunder. I drew breath.

Oppressed in my deliverance. After

This woman breaks her social system

For love, so counted—the love possible

To such,—and lilies are still lilies, By smutty hands, though spotted from

their white;

kind,

Than Romney Leigh, who lives by diagrams,

And crosses out the spontaneities Of all his individual, personal life, With formal universals. As if man And turn your whiteness dead-blue." Were set upon a high stool at a desk. To keep God's books for Him, in red I think I could have walked through and black,

God

To an individualism of the Infinite, To be so cruel,"—and I emptied out

ing up

The golden spray of multitudinous worlds

In measure to the proclive weight and

Of His inner nature,—the spontaneous love

Still proof and outflow of spontaneous life?

Then live, Aurora!

Two hours afterward, Within St. Margaret's Court I stood alone,

Close-veiled. A sick child, from an ague-fit,

Whose wasted right hand gambled gainst his left

With an old brass button, in a blot of

Jeered weakly at me as I passed across The uneven pavement; while a woman, rouged

Upon the angular cheek-bones, kerchief torn,

Thin dangling locks, and flat lascivious mouth,

and out.

By turns some bed-rid creature and myself,-" Lie still there, mother! liker the

dead dog You'll be to-morrow. What, we pick

our way,

Fine madam, with those damnable small feet!

We cover up our face from doing good, As if it were our purse! What brings you here,

My lady? is't to find my gentleman And thus she is better, haply, of her Who visits his tame pigeon in the eaves?

Our cholera catch you with its cramps and spasms.

And tumble up your good clothes, veil and all.

I looked up;

hell that day,

And feel by millions! What, if even | And never flinched. "The dear Christ comfort you,"

Were chiefly God by living out Him- I said, "you must have been most miserable

had cast

The last charm in the cauldron, the whole court

Went boiling, bubbling up, from all its doors

And windows, with a hideous wail of laughs

And roar of oaths, and blows perhaps . . . I passed

Too quickly for distinguishing . . . and pushed

A little side-door, hanging on a hinge, And plunged into the dark, and groped and climbed

The long, steep, narrow stair 'twixt broken rail

And mildewed wall that let the plaster

To startle me in the blackness. Still. up, up!

So high lived Romney's bride. I paused at last

Before a low door in the roof, and knocked:

There came an answer like a hurried dove-

"So soon? can that be Mister Leigh? so soon?"

And as I entered, an ineffable face Met mine upon the threshold. "Oh, not you,

Not you!" . . . the dropping of the voice implied.

"Then, if not you, for me not any

I looked her in the eyes, and held her hands

And said, "I am his cousin,-Romney Leigh's;

And here I'm come to see my cousin

She touched me with her face and with her voice.

This daughter of the people. Such soft flowers, From such rough roots? the people,

under there, Can sin so, curse so, look so, smell so

. . . faugh! Yet have such daughters?

Was Marian Erle.

Nowise beautiful She was not white

nor brown. But could look either, like a mist that

changed

My purse upon the stones: when, as I | According to being shone on more or

The hair, too, ran its opulence of curls In doubt 'twixt dark and bright, nor left vou clear

To name the colour. Too much hair perhaps

(I'll name a fault here) for so small a head,

Which seemed to droop on that side and on this.

As a full-blown rose uneasy with its weight.

Though not a breath should trouble it. Again,

The dimple in the cheek had better gone

With redder, fuller rounds: and somewhat large

The mouth was, though the milky little teeth

Dissolved it to so infantine a smile! For soon it smiled at me; the eyes smiled too,

But 'twas as if remembering they had wept.

And knowing they should, some day, weep again.

We talked. She told me all her story out.

Which I'll re-tell with fuller utterance,

As coloured and confirmed in aftertimes

By others, and herself too. Marian Erle

Was born upon the ledge of Malvern

To eastward, in a hut, built up at night

To evade the landlord's eye, of mud and turf,

Still liable, if once he looked that way,

To being straight levelled, scattered by his foot,

Like any other anthill. Born, I say; God sent her to His world, commissioned right,

Her human testimonials fully signed, Not scant in soul—complete in lineaments:

But others had to swindle her a place To wail in when she had come. No place for her,

By man's law! born an outlaw, was For her own broken heart. this babe.

Her first cry in our strange and strangling air, When cast in spasms out by the shud-

dering womb, Was wrong against the social code,-

forced wrong.

What business had the baby to cry there?

I tell her story and grow passionate. She, Marian, did not tell it so, but used

Meek words that made no wonder of herself

For being so sad a creature. "Mister Leigh

Considered truly that such things should change.

They will, in heaven-but meantime, on the earth,

There's none can like a nettle as a pink,

Except himself. We're nettles, some of us.

And give offence by the act of springing up

And, if we leave the damp side of the

The hoes, of course, are on us." So she said.

Her father earned his life by random iobs Despised by steadier workmen-

keeping swine

On commons, picking hops, or hurrying on

The harvest at wet seasons,—or, at need.

Assisting the Welsh drovers, when a drove

mist

Below the mountain-road, and sowed the wind

With wandering neighings. In between the gaps

Of such irregular work, he drank and slept.

And cursed his wife because, the pence | She learnt God that way, and was being out,

She could not buy more drink. At | Whenever she went home, -yet came which she turned

venge,

There's not a crime

But takes its proper change out still in crime,

If once rung on the counter of this world:

Let sinners look to it.

Yet the outcast child. For whom the very mother's face forewent

The mother's special patience, lived and grew;

Learnt early to cry low, and walk alone,

pathetic vacillating With that

Of the infant body on the uncertain

(The earth being felt unstable ground so soon).

At which most women's arms unclose at once With irrepressive instinct. Thus, at

three. This poor weaned kid would run off

from the fold, This babe would steal off from the

mother's chair, And, creeping through the golden

walls of gorse, Would find some keyhole toward the secresy

Of Heaven's high blue, and, nestling down, peer out-

Oh, not to catch the angels at their games,

She had never heard of angels,—but to gaze

She knew not why, to see she knew not what.

A-hungering outward from the barren earth Of startled horses plunged into the For something like a joy. She liked,

she said. To dazzle black her sight against the

sky, For then, it seemed, some grand blind

Love came down,

And groped her out, and clasped her with a kiss;

beat for it

again,

(The worm) and beat her baby in re- | As surely as the trapped hare, getting free,

Returns to his form. This grand "I heard her laugh last night in Oxblind Love, she said.

This skyey father and mother both in

Instructed her and civilised her more Than even the Sunday-school did afterward.

To which a lady sent her to learn books

And sit upon a long bench in a row With other children. Well, she laughed sometimes

To see them laugh and laugh, and moil their texts:

But ofter she was sorrowful with noise.

them hard.

That everthey should laugh so. There was one

She loved indeed,—Rose Bell, a seven years' child

So pretty and clever, who read syllables

would laugh

At nothing—hold your finger up, she laughed.

Then shook her curls down on her Her filial and tormented heart, henceeves and mouth

To hide her make-mirth from the They struck their blows at virtue. schoolmaster.

And Rose's pelting glee, as frank as To learn you have a Father up in rain

cherry - blossoms, brightened Marian too,

To see another merry whom she loved.

She whispered once (the children side by side,

With mutual arms entwined about their necks)

"Your mother lets you laugh so?" "Ay," said Rose,

"She lets me. She was dug into the ground Six years since, I being but a yearling

wean.

Such mothers let us play and lose our

And never scold nor beat us! don't you wish

You had one like that?" There, Marian breaking off Looked suddenly in my face. "Poor Returning to the hills. Hills draw

Rose," said she.

ford Street.

I'd pour out half my blood to stop that laugh.-

Poor Rose, poor Rose!" said Marian. She resumed.

It tried her, when she had learnt at Sunday-school

What God was, what He wanted from us all.

And how, in choosing sin, we vexed the Christ.

To go straight home and hear her father pull

The Name down on us from the thunder-shelf.

And wondered if their mothers beat Then drink away his soul into the dark

From seeing judgment. Father. mother, home.

Were God and Heaven reversed to her: the more

She knew of Right, the more she guessed their wrong;

When Marian was at letters; she Her price paid down for knowledge, was to know

The vileness of her kindred: through her heart.

forth.

Oh, 'tis hard

Heaven By a gathering certain sense of being.

on earth. Still worse than orphaned: 'tis too

heavy a grief, The having to thank God for such a iov!

And so passed Marian's life from year to year.

Her parents took her with them when they tramped.

Dodged lanes and heaths, frequented towns and fairs.

And once went farther and saw Manchester.

And once the sea, that blue end of the

That fair scroll-finis of a wicked book,— And twice a prison,—back at intervals.

like heaven.

their hands

To pull you from the vile flats up to them:

And though, perhaps, these strollers still strolled back.

As sheep do, simply that they knew the way. They certainly felt bettered unaware

Emerging from the social smut of towns

To wipe their feet clean on the mountain-turf.

In which long wanderings, Marian lived and learned,

Endured and learned. The people At broken moments of the noontide on the roads

Would stop and ask her how her eyes When leave was given her to untie her outgrew

Her cheeks, and if she meant to lodge And rest upon the dusty roadside the birds

In all that hair; and then they lifted

The miller in his cart, a mile or twain.

The butcher's boy on horseback. Often, too.

The pedlar stopped, and tapped her on the head

With absolute forefinger, brown and ringed,

And asked if peradventure she could read!

And when she answered "Av," would toss her down

Some stray odd volume from his heavy pack,

A Thomson's "Seasons," mulcted of the "Spring,"

Or half a play of Shakspeare's, torn across:

(She had to guess the bottom of a page By just the top sometimes,—as diffi-

As, sitting on the moon, to guess the

earth!) Or else a sheaf of leaves (for that small Ruth's

heart of books.

From Churchyard Elegies and Edens | Were thrown you out of heaven at Lost,

and Tom Jones.

things distinct.

And stronger sometimes, holding out And oft the jangling influence jarred the child

> Like looking at a sunset full of grace Through a pothouse window while the drunken oaths

Went on behind her: but she weeded out

Her book-leaves, threw away the leaves that hurt

(First tore them small, that none should find a word),

And made a nosegay of the sweet and good

To fold within her breast, and pore upon

glare.

cloak

bank

From the highway's dust. Or oft, the journey done,

Some city friend would lead her by the hand

To hear a lecture at an institute: And thus she had grown, this Marian

Erle of ours, To no book-learning,—she was ignor-

Of authors, -not in earshot of the things

Out-spoken o'er the heads of common men,

By men who are uncommon,—but within

The cadenced hum of such, and capable

Of catching from the fringes of the wind

Some fragmentary phrases, here and there,

Of that fine music,—which, being carried in

To her soul, had reproduced itself afresh

In finer motions of the lips and lids.

Small gleanings) torn out from the She said, in speaking of it, "If a flower

intervals.

From Burns, and Bunyan, Selkirk, You'd soon attain to a trick of looking up,-

"Twas somewhat hard to keep the And so with her." She counted me her years,

Till I felt old; and then she counted Her mother had been badly beat, and

ashamed.

She told me she was almost glad and (That must have been): she came in

With no one to break up her crystal Her daughter's headgear comb, let thoughts;

While rhymes from lovely poems Upon her, like a sudden waterfall, span around

Their ringing circles of ecstatic

Beneath the moistened finger of the Hour. Her parents called her a strange,

sickly child, Not good for much, and given to sulk

and stare, And smile into the hedges and the

clouds,

And tremble if one shook her from her fit

By any blow, or word even. Out-door iobs

Went ill with her; and household quiet work,

She was not born to. Had they kept the north,

They might have had their pennyworth out of her,

Like other parents, in the factories (Your children work for you, not you for them.

Or else they better had been choked with air

The first breath drawn); but, in this tramping life, Was nothing to be done with such a

child, But tramp and tramp. And yet she

knitted hose Not ill, and was not dull at needle-

work: And all the country people gave her

pence For darning stockings past their As passionate as fear, she tore her

natural age, And patching petticoats from old to Like lilies from the rocks, from hers new.

And other light work done for thrifty And sprang down, bounded headlong wives.

that day—

felt

Her sorrowful pleasures, till I felt The bruises sore about her wretched soul

suddenly.

On such and such a season; sate and And snatching, in a sort of breathless rage,

down the hair

And drew her drenched and passive, by the arm,

Outside the hut they lived in. When the child

Could clear her blinded face from all that stream

Of tresses . . . there, a man stood, with beast's eyes,

That seemed as they would swallow her alive.

Complete in body and spirit, hair and all,—

With burning stertorous breath that hurt her cheek,

He breathed so near. The mother held her tight,

Saying hard between her teeth— "Why wench, why wench,

The squire speaks to you now-the squire's too good;

He means to set you up, and comfort Be mannerly at least." The child

turned round. And looked up piteous in the mother's

(Be sure that mother's death-bed will

not want Another devil to damn, than such a look) . .

"Oh, mother!" then, with desperate glance to heaven,

"God, free me from my mother," she shrieked out,

"These mothers are too dreadful." And, with force

hands

and his.

down the steep,

Away from both—away, if possible, One day, said Marian,—the sun shone As far as God,—away! They yelled at her.

heard them vell.

She felt her name hiss after her from the hills.

Like shot from guns. On, on. And now she had cast

Mad fear

the ground ;

them up.

The green fields melted, wayside trees fell back To make room for her. Then, her

head grew vexed, Trees, fields, turned on her, and ran

after her: She heard the quick pants of the hills

behind. Their keen air pricked her neck. She

had lost her feet, Could run no more, yet, somehow,

went as fast,— The horizon, red 'twixt steeples in the

So sucked her forward, forward, while

her heart Kept swelling, swelling, till it swelled

so big It seemed to fill her body: then it

world and And overflowed the

swamped the light, "And now I am dead and safe." thought Marian Erle-

She had dropped, she had fainted.

As the sense returned, The night had passed—not life's night. She was 'ware

Of heavy tumbling motions, creaking wheels.

The driver shouting to the lazy team That swung their rankling bells against her brain:

While, through the waggon's coverture and chinks.

The cruel yellow morning pecked at her

Alive or dead, upon the straw inside. At which her soul ached back into the dark

And prayed, "no more of that." waggoner

Had found her in a ditch beneath the moon,

As famished hounds at a hare. She As white as moonshine, save for the oozing blood.

At first he thought her dead; but when he had wiped

The mouth and heard it sigh, he raised her up,

The voices off with the uplands. On. And laid her in his waggon in the straw.

Was running in her feet and killing And so conveyed her to the distant town

The white roads curled as if she burnt | To which his business called himself. and left

That heap of misery at the hospital.

She stirred :- the place seemed new and strange as death.

The white strait bed, with others strait and white,

Like graves dug side by side, at measured lengths,

And quiet people walking in and out With wonderful low voices and soft steps,

And apparitional equal care for each, Astonished her with order, silence, law:

And when a gentle hand held out a cup,

She took it, as you do at Sacrament, Half awed, half melted,-not being used, indeed,

To so much love as makes the form of

And courtesy of manners. Delicate drinks

And rare white bread, to which some dying eyes Were turned in observation. O my

God, How sick we must be, ere we make

men just! I think it frets the saints in heaven to

How many desolate creatures on the

Have learnt the simple dues of fellowship

And social comfort, in a hospital, As Marian did. She lay there, stunned.

half tranced, And wished, at intervals of growing

sense,

She might be sicker yet, if sickness made

The world so marvellous kind, the air so hushed.

And all her wake-time quiet as a sleep;

For now she understood (as such things were)

How sickness ended very oft in heaven. Among the unspoken raptures. Yet more sick.

And surelier happy. Then she dropped her lids,

And, folding up her hands as flowers at night,

Would lose no moment of the blessed rime.

She lay and seethed in fever many

But youth was strong and overcame the test:

Revolted soul and flesh were reconciled

And fetched back to the necessary day And daylight duties. She could creep

The long bare rooms, and stare out drearily

From any narrow window on the

Till some one, who had nursed her as a

Said coldly to her, as an enemy, She had leave to go next week,

being well enough,' While only her heart ached. "Go next week," thought she,

"Next week! how would it be with her next week.

Let out into that terrible street alone Among the pushing people . . . to go . . . where?

One day, the last before the dreaded

Among the convalescents, like herself Prepared to go next morning, she sate dumb.

And heard half absently the women talk.

How one was famished for her baby's cheeks-

"The little wretch would know her! a year old!

And lively, like his father!" one was

To get to work, and fill some clamor- None asked me till this moment. Can ous mouths;

And one was tender for her dear good-

Who had missed her sorely, -and one. querulous . . .

"Would pay those scandalous neighbours who had dared

To talk about her as already dead."— And one was proud . . . "and if her sweetheart Luke

Had left her for a ruddier face than

(The gossip would be seen through at a glance).

Sweet riddance of such sweethearts let him hang!

'Twere good to have been as sick for such an end."

And while they talked, and Marian felt the worse

For having missed the worst of all their wrongs,

A visitor was ushered through the wards

paused among the talkers. "When he looked, And

It was as if he spoke, and when he spoke

He sang perhaps," said Marian; " could she tell?

She only knew" (so much she had chronicled,

As seraphs might, the making of the sun) "That he who came and spake, was

Romney Leigh, And then, and there, she saw and

heard him first." And when it was her turn to have the

Upon her,—all those buzzing pallid.

Being satisfied with comfort—when he changed

To Marian, saying "And you? you're going, where? "-

She, moveless as a worm beneath a stone

Which some one's stumbling foot has spurned aside,

Writhed suddenly, astonished with the light,

And breaking into sobs cried, "Where I go?

I say

Where I go? when it has not seemed worth while

To God Himself, Who thinks of every-

To think of me, and fix where I shall go ? "

"So young," he gently asked her, "you have lost

Your father and your mother?"

" Both," she said, " Both lost! my father was burnt up with gin

Or ever I sucked milk, and so is lost. My mother sold me to a man last month.

And so my mother's lost, 'tis manifest.

And I, who fled from her for miles and miles,

As if I had caught sight of the fires of

Through some wild gap (she was my mother, sir),

It seems I shall be lost too, presently, And so we end, all three of us."

" Poor child!"

He said, —with such a pity in his voice, It soothed her more than her own tears,—" poor child!

'Tis simple that betrayal by mother's

Should bring despair of God's too. Yet be taught;

He's better to us than many mothers

And children cannot wander beyond reach

Of the sweep of His white raiment. Touch and hold!

And if you weep still, weep where John was laid

While Jesus loved him." "She could say the words," She told me, "exactly as he uttered

them A year back, . . . since, in any

doubt or dark, They came out like the stars, and shone on her

With just their comfort. Common words, perhaps;

The ministers in church might say the same;

But he, he made the church with what he spoke,—

The difference was the miracle," said she.

Then catching up her smile to ravishment,

She added quickly, "I repeat his words.

But not his tones: can anyone repeat The music of an organ, out of church? And when he said 'poor child,' I shut my eyes

To feel how tenderly his voice broke

through, As the ointment-box broke on the

Holy feet To let out the rich medicative nard."

She told me how he had raised and

rescued her With reverent pity, as, in touching

grief, He touched the wounds of Christ .-

and made her feel More self-respecting. Hope, he called,

belief In God,—work, worship . . . there-

fore let us pray! And thus, to snatch her soul from

atheism. And keep it stainless from her mother's

face, He sent her to a famed sempstresshouse

Far off in London, there to work and hope.

With that, they parted. She kept sight of Heaven,

But not of Romney. He had good to do To others: through the days and through the nights.

She sewed and sewed and sewed. She brooded sometimes.

And wondered, while, along the tawny light,

She struck the new thread into her needle's eve.

How people, without mothers on the hills.

Could choose the town to live in !then she drew

The stitch, and mused how Romney's face would look,

And if 'twere likely he'd remember hers,

When they two had their meeting after death.

FOURTH BOOK

from thence

stress girl,

and quick,

cough

ing round. The others took occasion to laugh

Gave up at last. Among the workers,

spoke A bold girl with black eyebrows and

red lips,-"You know the news? Who's dying,

do you think?

Our Lucy Gresham. I expected it As little as Nell Hart's wedding. Blush not, Nell,

Thy curls be red enough without thy cheeks: And, some day, there'll be found a

man to dote On red curls.—Lucy Gresham swooned

last night, Dropped sudden in the street while going home:

And now the baker says, who took her And laid her by her grandmother in

the silk.

Let's hope he gave her a loaf too. within reach,

For otherwise they'll starve before they die.

That funny pair of bedfellows! Miss! Bell.

I'll thank you for the scissors. The old crone

Is paralytic—that's the reason why Our Lucy's thread went faster than her breath.

Which went too quick, we all know. Marian Erle

Why, Marian Erle, you're not the fool to cry?

Your tears spoil Lady Waldemar's new dress.

You piece of pity!"

And, breaking through the talk and through the work.

THEY met still sooner. 'Twas a year Went outward, in the face of their surprise.

That Lucy Gresham, the sick semp- To Lucy's home, to nurse her back to

Who sewed by Marian's chair so still Or down to death. She knew, by such an act.

And leant her head upon the back to All place and grace were forfeit in the house.

More freely when, the mistress turn- Whose mistress would supply the missing hand

With necessary, not inhuman haste, And take no blame. But pity, too. had dues:

She could not leave a solitary soul To founder in the dark, while she sate still

And lavished stitches on a lady's hem As if no other work were paramount. "Why. God." thought Marian, "has

a missing hand This moment; Lucy wants a drink, perhaps.

Let others miss me! never miss me, God!"

So Marian sate by Lucy's bed, content With duty, and was strong, for recompense.

To hold the lamp of human love armhigh

To catch the death-strained eyes and comfort them,

Until the angels, on the luminous side He'll give her a week to die in. Pass Of death, had got theirs ready. And she said,

If Lucy thanked her sometimes. called her kind,

It touched her strangely. "Marian Erle, called kind!

What, Marian, beaten and sold, who could not die!

'Tis verily good fortune to be kind. Ah. vou." she said, " who are born to

such a grace, Be sorry for the unlicensed class, the

poor. Reduced to think the best good for-'tune means

That others, simply, should be kind to them."

From sleep to sleep while Lucy slid Marian rose up straight, So gently, like the light upon a hill. Of which none names the moment Have vexed him. Also, when he that it goes.

Though all see when 'tis gone,-a man came in

The old And stood beside the bed. idiot wretch

Screamed feebly, like a baby overlain,

"Sir, sir, you won't mistake me for the corpse?

Don't look at me, sir ! never bury me ! Although I lie here, I'm alive as you, Except my legs and arms,—I eat and drink.

And understand—(that you're the gentleman

Who fits the funerals up. Heaven speed you, sir,)

And certainly I should be livelier still If Lucy here . . . sir, Lucy is the corpse . . .

Had worked more properly to buy me wine:

But Lucy, sir, was always slow at work,

I shan't lose much by Lucy. Marian

Speak up and show the gentleman the corpse."

And then a voice said. "Marian Erle." She rose:

It was the hour for angels—there, stood hers!

She scarcely marvelled to see Romnev Leigh.

As light November snows to empty

As grass to graves, as moss to mildewed stones.

As July suns to ruins, through the rents.

As ministering spirits to mourners, through a loss, -As Heaven itself to men, through

pangs of death, He came uncalled wherever grief had

come. "And so," said Marian Erle, "we

met anew." And added softly, "so, we shall not

part."

He was not angry that she had left. The first grave-digger proves it with the house

Wherein he placed her. Well-she And pats all even. Need we wait for had feared it might

found her set

On keeping, though the dead was out of sight.

That half-dead, half-live body left behind With cankerous heart and flesh.—

which took your best And cursed you for the little good it

(Could any leave the bedrid wretch

alone. So joyless, she was thankless even to

God, Much less to you?) he did not say

'twas well, Yet Marian thought he did not take it

Since day by day he came, and, every

day, She felt within his utterance and his eves

A closer, tenderer presence of the soul,

Until at last he said, "We shall not part."

On that same day, was Marian's work complete:

She had smoothed the empty bed, and swept the floor

Of coffin sawdust, set the chairs anew The dead had ended gossip in, and stood

In that poor room so cold and orderly, The door-key in her hand, prepared to go

As they had, howbeit not their way. He spoke.

" Dear Marian, of one clay God made us all,

And though men push and poke and paddle in't

(As children play at fashioning dirtpies)

And call their fancies by the name of facts.

Assuming difference, lordship, privilege,

When all's plain dirt,—they come back to it at last:

a spade,

You, Marian, and I, Romney?" She, at that,

Looked blindly in his face, as when one looks

Through driving autumn-rains to find the sky.

He went on speaking.

'Marian, I being born What men call noble, and you, issued from

The noble people,—though the tyrannous sword

Which pierced Christ's heart, has cleft the world in twain 'Twixt class and class, opposing rich

to poor,-

Shall we keep parted? Not so. Let us lean

And strain together rather, each to

Compress the red lips of this gaping wound,

As far as two souls can, -ay, lean and

I, from my superabundance,-from your want.

You,—joining in a protest 'gainst the wrong

On both sides!"-

All the rest, he held her hand In speaking, which confused the sense of much:

Her heart, against his words, beat out so thick.

They might as well be written on the

Where some poor bird, escaping from hawk's beak,

Has dropped, and beats its shuddering wings,—the lines

Are rubbed so,—yet 'twas something like to this. -" That they two, standing at the

two extremes Of social classes, had received one

Been dedicate and drawn beyond

themselves To mercy and ministration,—he, in-

deed. Through what he knew, and she, through what she felt,

He, by man's conscience, she, by woman's heart.

Relinquishing their several 'vantage Then broke off in a rapid radiant posts

Of wealthy ease and honourable toil,

To work with God at love. And. since God willed

That, putting out his hand to touch this ark.

He found a woman's hand there, he'd accept

The sign too, hold the tender fingers

And say, 'My fellow-worker, be my wife!'"

She told the tale with simple, rustic turns.-

Strong leaps of meaning in her sudden eyes

That took the gaps of any imperfect phrase Of the unschooled speaker: I have

rather writ

The thing I understood so, than the thing

I heard so. And I cannot render right Her quick gesticulation, wild vet soft.

Self-startled from the habitual mood she used.

Half sad, half languid,—like dumb creatures (now

A rustling bird, and now a wandering deer,

Or squirrel against the oak-gloom flashing up

His sidelong burnished head, in just her way

Of savage spontaneity) that stir

Abruptly the green silence of the woods,

And make it stranger, holier, more profound;

As Nature's general heart confessed

Of life, and then fell backward on repose.

I kissed the lips that ended.—"So indeed

He loves you, Marian?"

"Loves me!" She looked up With a child's wonder when you ask him first

Who made the sun—a puzzled blush, that grew,

smile

"Loves me! he Of sure solution. loves all,-

And me, of course. He had not asked me else

To work with him for ever, and be his wife."

Her words reproved me. This perhaps was love-

To have its hands too full of gifts to give,

For putting out a hand to take a gift; To love so much, the perfect round of

Includes, in strict conclusion, the being loved;

As Eden-dew went up and fell again, Enough for watering Eden. Obviously

She had not thought about his love at all:

The cataracts of her soul had poured themselves.

And risen self-crowned in rainbow: would she ask

she was crowned.

With women of my class, 'tis other- I'd rather far be trodden by his foot, wise:

We haggle for the small change of our gold.

And so much love, accord, for so much love,

Rialto-prices. therefore Are wrong?

If marriage be a contract, look to it then.

Contracting parties should be equal, just;

But if, a simple fealty on one side, A mere religion,—right to give, is all, And certain brides of Europe duly ask To mount the pile, as Indian widows do.

The spices of their tender youth heaped up,

The jewels of their gracious virtues worn,

More gems, more glory,—to consume entire

For a living husband! as the man's alive.

Not dead,—the woman's duty, by so

Advanced in England, beyond Hin- While I shall set myself to read his dostan.

I sate there, musing, till she touched my hand

With hers, as softly as a strange white bird

She feared to startle in touching. " You are kind.

But are you, peradventure, vexed at

Because your cousin takes me for a wife?

I know I am not worthy—nay, in truth,

I'm glad on't, since, for that, he chooses me.

He likes the poor things of the world the best :

I would not therefore, if I could, be rich:

It pleasures him to stoop for buttercups;

I would not be a rose upon the wall A queen might stop at, near the palace-door,

To say to a courtier, 'Pluck that rose for me,

Who crowned her?—it sufficed that 'It's prettier than the rest.' O Romney Leigh!

> Than lie in a great queen's bosom.' Out of breath

> She paused. "Sweet Marian, do you disavow The roses with that face?"

> She dropt her head, As if the wind had caught that flower of her,

> And bent it in the garden,—then looked up

> With grave assurance. "Well, you think me bold!

But so we all are, when we're praying God.

And if I'm bold—yet, lady, credit me, That, since I know myself for what I

Much fitter for his handmaid than his wife,

I'll prove the handmaid and the wife at once.

Serve tenderly, and love obediently. And be a worthier mate, perhaps, than some

Who are wooed in silk among their learned books:

eyes,

Till such grow plainer to me than the French

To wisest ladies. Do you think I'll miss

A letter, in the spelling of his mind? No more than they do, when they sit and write

Their flying words with flickering wildfowl tails,

Nor ever pause to ask how many t's, Should that be y or i—they know't so well:

I've seen them writing, when I brought a dress

And waited,—floating out their soft white hands

On shining paper. But they're hard sometimes,

For all those hands !—we've used out many nights,

And worn the yellow daylight into shreds

Which flapped and shivered down our aching eyes

Till night appeared more tolerable, just

That pretty ladies might look beautiful,

Who said at last . . . 'You're lazy in that house!

'You're slow in sending home the work,—I count

'I've waited near an hour for't.'
Pardon me,—

I do not blame them, madam, nor misprize; They are fair and gracious; ay, but

not like you, Since none but you has Mister Leigh's

own blood
Both noble and gentle,—and, with-

out it . . . well,
They are fair, I said; so fair, it

scarce seems strange That, flashing out in any looking-

The wonder of their glorious brows and breasts,

They are charmed so, they forget to look behind

And mark how pale we've grown, we pitiful

Remainders of the world. And so, perhaps,

If Mister Leigh had chosen a wife from these,

She might . . . although he's better than her best.

And dearly she would know it . . . steal a thought

Which should be all his, an eyeglance from his face,

To plunge into the mirror opposite, In search of her own beauty's pearl: while I...

Ah, dearest lady, serge will outweigh silk

For winter-wear, when bodies feel a-cold,

And I'll be a true wife to your cousin Leigh."

Before I answered, he was there himself.

I think he had been standing in the room,

And listened probably to half her talk,

Arrested, turned to stone,—as white as stone.

Will tender sayings make men look so white?

He loves her then profoundly.

Aurora? Here I meet you!"—We clasped hands.

"Even so, dear Romney. Lady Waldemar

Has sent me in haste to find a cousin of mine
Who shall be."

" Lady Waldemar is good."

"Here's one, at least, who is good,"
I sighed, and touched

Poor Marian's happy head, as, doglike, she

Most passionately patient, waited on, A-tremble for her turn of greeting words:

"I've sate a full hour with your Marian Erle,

And learnt the thing by heart, and, from my heart,

Am therefore competent to give you thanks

For such a cousin."

"You accept at last A gift from me, Aurora, without scorn?

At last I please you?"—How his Your right in choosing." voice was changed! "You cannot please a woman

against her will,

And once you vexed me. Shall we As some grown man, who never had speak of that?

And I not ignorant—let it pass. And now.

You please me, Romney, when you please vourself:

So, please you, be fanatical in love, And I'm well pleased. Ah, cousin! at the old hall.

Among the gallery portraits of our Leighs.

We shall not find a sweeter signory Than this pure forehead's."

Not a word he said. How arrogant men are !- Even philanthropists,

Who try to take a wife up in the way They put down a subscriptioncheque,-if once

you so,

Most charitable sir,"-feel ill at ease, As though she had wronged them somehow. I suppose

We women should remember what we are.

And not throw back an obolus inscribed

With Cæsar's image, lightly. I resumed.

"It strikes me, some of those sublime Vandykes

Were not too proud, to make good saints in heaven;

And, if so, then they're not too proud to-day

To bow down (now the ruffs are off their necks)

And own this good, true, noble Marian, . . . yours,

And mine, I'll say !—For poets (bear the word)

Half-poets even, are still whole democrats,-

Oh, not that we're disloyal to the high. But loyal to the low, and cognisant Of the less scrutable majesties. For

I comprehend your choice—I justify

"No, no, no," he sighed. With a sort of melancholy impatient scorn,

a child. We'll say, then, you were noble in it Puts by some child who plays at being a man;

> -" You did not, do not, cannot comprehend

My choice, my ends, my motives. nor myself:

No matter now—we'll let it pass. vou sav.

I thank you for your generous cousinship

Which helps this present; I accept for her

Your favourable thoughts. We're fallen on days.

We two, who are not poets, when to wed

Requires less mutual love than common love.

For two together to bear out at once She turns and says, "I will not tax Upon the loveless many. Work in pairs.

In galley-couplings or in marriagerings.

The difference lies in the honour, not the work .-

And such we're bound to, I and she. · But love,

(You poets are benighted in this age : The hour's too late for catching even moths.

You've gnats instead,) love! love's fool-paradise

Is out of date, like Adam's. Set a swan

To swim the Trenton, rather than true love

To float its fabulous plumage safely down

The cataracts of this loud transitiontime,-

Whose roar, for ever, henceforth, in my ears,

Must keep me deaf to music."

There, I turned And kissed poor Marian, out of discontent.

The man had baffled, chafed me, till I flung

For refuge to the woman, -as, some times,

Impatient of some crowded room's But felt my smile too mournful for close smell.

night,

And cool your angry forehead. She, at least,

Was not built up, as walls are, brick by brick;

Each fancy squared, each feeling ranged by line, The very heat of burning youth

applied

To indurate forms and systems! excellent bricks.

A well-built wall, -which stops you on the road,

And, into which, you cannot see an inch

Although you beat your head against it-pshaw!

"Adieu," I said, "for this time, cousins both;

And, cousin Romney, pardon me the word,

Be happy!-oh, in some esoteric sense Of course !- I mean no harm in wishing well.

Adieu, my Marian :- may she come to me, .

Dear Romney, and be married from my house?

It is not part of your philosophy To keep your bird upon the blackthorn ? "

" Av." He answered, "but it is :- I take my wife

Directly from the people, -and she comes,

As Austria's daughter to imperial France,

Betwixt her eagles, blinking not her From Margaret's Court at garret-

height, to meet And wed me at St. James's, nor put

Her gown of serge for that. The things we do,

We do: we'll wear no mask, as if we blushed."

"Dear Romney, you're the poet," I replied,-

my word,

You throw a window open, and lean And turned and went. Av. masks. I thought,—beware

To breathe a long breath in the dewy Of tragic masks, we tie before the glass.

Uplifted on the cothurn half a yard Above the natural stature! we would

Heroic parts to ourselves,—and end, perhaps.

As impotently as Athenian wives Who shrieked in fits at the Eumenides.

His foot pursued me down the stair. "At least,

You'll suffer me to walk with you beyond

These hideous streets, these graves, where men alive.

Packed close with earthworms, burr unconsciously

About the plague that slew them: let me go.

The very women pelt their souls in mud

At any woman who walks here alone.

How came you here alone?-you are ignorant."

We had a strange and melancholy walk:

The night came drizzling downward in dark rain; And, as we walked, the colour of the

time. The act, the presence, my hand

upon his arm, His voice in my ear, and mine to my

own sense, Appeared unnatural. We talked

modern books. And daily papers; Spanish Marriageschemes.

And English climate—was't so cold last year?

And will the wind change by tomorrow morn?

Can Guizot stand? is London full? is trade

Competitive? has Dickens turned his hinge

A-pinch upon the fingers of the great?

And are potatoes to grow mythical

Like moly? will the apple die out too?

Which way is the wind to-night? south-east? due east?

We talked on fast, while every common word

Seemed tangled with the thunder at one end,
And ready to pull down upon our

heads
A terror out of sight. And yet to

pause Were surelier mortal: we tore greedily up

All silence, all the innocent breathing-points,

As if, like pale conspirators in haste, We tore up papers where our signatures

Imperilled us to an ugly shame or death.

I cannot tell you why it was. 'Tis plain

We had not loved nor hated: wherefore dread

To spill gunpowder on ground safe from fire?

Perhaps we had lived too closely, to diverge

So absolutely: leave two clocks, they say,

Wound up to different hours, upon one shelf,

And slowly, through the interior wheels of each,

The blind mechanic motion sets it-

self A-throb, to feel out for the mutual

time.
It was not so with us, indeed. While

he Struck midnight, I kept striking six

at dawn,
While he marked judgment, I, redemption-day;

And such exception to a general law, Imperious upon inert matter even, Might make us, each to either, insecure.

A beckoning mystery, or a troubling fear.

I mind me, when we parted at the door,

How strange his good-night sounded, —like good-night Beside a deathbed, where the morrow's sun

Is sure to come too late for more good-days:—

And all that night I thought . . . "Good-night," said he.

And so, a month passed. Let me set it down

At once,—I have been wrong, I have been wrong.

We are wrong always, when we think too much

Of what we think or are; albeit our thoughts

Be verily bitter as self-sacrifice,... We're no less selfish. If we sleep on rocks

Or roses, sleeping past the hour of noon

We're lazy. This I write against myself.

I had done a duty in the visit paid To Marian, and was ready otherwise To give the witness of my presence and name

Whenever she should marry.— Which, I thought,

Sufficed. I even had cast into the scale

An overweight of justice toward the match;

The Lady Waldemar had missed her tool,
Had broken it in the look as being

Had broken it in the lock as being too straight

For a crooked purpose, while poor
Marian Erle
Missed nothing in my accents or my

Missed nothing in my accents or my acts:

I had not been ungenerous on the whole,

Nor yet untender; so, enough. I

Tired, overworked: this marriage somewhat jarred;

Or, if it did not, all the bridal noise...

The pricking of the map of life with pins,

In schemes of . . . "Here we'll go," and "There we'll stay,"
And "Everywhere we'll prosper in our love,"

Was scarce my business. Let them order it;

Who else should care? I threw myself aside.

As one who had done her work and shuts her eyes

To rest the better.

I, who should have known, Forereckoned mischief! Where we disavow

Being keeper to our brother, we're his Cain.

I might have held that poor child to my heart '

A little longer! 'twould have hurt me much

To have hastened by its beats the marriage-day,

And kept her safe meantime from tampering hands,

Or, peradventure, traps? What drew me back

From telling Romney plainly, the designs

Of Lady Waldemar, as spoken out To me . . . me ? had I any right, ay, right,

With womanly compassion and reserve

To break the fall of woman's impudence ?-

To stand by calmly, knowing what I knew.

And hear him call her good?

Distrust that word. "There is none good save God," said Jesus Christ.

If He once, in the first creation-

Called creatures good,—for ever. afterward,

The Devil only has done it, and his heirs.

The knaves who win so, and the fools who lose:

The word's grown dangerous. In the middle age, I think they called malignant fays

and imps Good people. A good neighbour,

even in this, Is fatal sometimes, cuts your morning up

To mince-meat of the very smallest

Then helps to sugar her bohea at So soft and soundless, simply beaunight

With your reputation. I have known good wives.

As chaste, or nearly so, as Potiphar's:

And good, good mothers, who would use a child

To better an intrigue: good friends. beside.

(Very good) who hung succinctly cound your neck

And sucked your breath, as cats are fabled to do

By sleeping infants. And we all have known

Good critics, who have stamped out poet's hopes :

Good statesmen, who pulled ruin on the state:

Good patriots, who, for a theory, risked a cause ;

Good kings, who disembowelled for a

Good Popes, who brought all good to jeopardy;

Good Christians, who sate still in easy-chairs.

And damned the general world for standing up.-Now, may the good God pardon all

good men!

How bitterly I speak,—how certainly The innocent white milk in us is turned.

By much persistent shining of the

Shake up the sweetest in us long enough

With men, it drops to foolish curd, too sour

To feed the most untender of Christ's lambs.

should have thought . . . a woman of the world

Like her I'm meaning,—centre to herself.

Who has wheeled on her own pivot half a life

In isolated self-love and self-will,

As a windmill seen at distance radia-

Its delicate white vans against the sky,

tiful.-

Seen nearer . . . what a roar and tear it makes,

How it grinds and bruises! . . . if she loves at last,

Her love's a re-adjustment of selflove,

No more; a need felt of another's use

To her one advantage,—as the mill wants grain,

The fire wants fuel, the very wolf wants prey;

And none of these is more unscrupulous

Than such a charming woman when she loves.

She'll not be thwarted by an obstacle

So trifling as . . . her soul is . . . much less yours !--

Is God a consideration?—she loves you,

Not God; she will not flinch for Him indeed:

She did not for the Marchioness of Perth.

When wanting tickets for the birthnight-ball.

She loves you, sir, with passion, to lunacy;

She loves you like herdiamonds . . . almost.

Well, A month passed so, and then the notice came;

On such a day the marriage at the church.

I was not backward.

Half Saint Giles in frieze Was bidden to meet Saint James in cloth of gold,

And, after contract at the altar, pass

To eat a marriage-feast on Hampstead Heath.

Of course the people came in uncompelled,

Lame, blind, and worse—sick, sorrowful, and worse,

The humours of the peccant social wound

All pressed out, poured out upon Pimlico,

Exasperating the unaccustomed air With hideous interfusion: you'd suppose

A finished generation, dead of plague, Swept outward from their graves into the sun,

The moil of death upon them. What a sight!

A holiday of miserable men

Is sadder than a burial-day of kings.

They clogged the streets, they oozed into the church

In adark slowstream, like blood. To see that sight,

The noble ladies stood up in their pews,

Some pale for fear, a few as red for

Some pale for fear, a few as red for hate,

Some simply curious, some just insolent,

And some in wondering scorn,—
What next? what next?"

These crushed their delicate roselips from the smile

That misbecame them in a holy place,

With broidered hems of perfumed handkerchiefs;

Those passed the salts with confidence of eyes

And simultaneous shiver of moiré
silk;

While all the aisles, alive and black with heads,
Crawled slowly toward the altar

from the street,
As bruised snakes crawl and hiss out

of a hole With shuddering involutions, sway-

ing slow From right to left, and then from

left to right,
In pants and pauses. What an ugly
crest

Of faces, rose upon you everywhere, From that crammed mass! you did not usually

See faces like them in the open day: They hide in cellars, not to make you mad

As Romney Leigh is.—Faces!—O

my God, We call those, faces? men's and

women's . . . ay,
And children's ;—babies, hanging
like a rag

Forgotten on their mother's neck, — poor mouths,

mother's blow,

Before they are taught her cursing. Faces! . . . phew,

We'll call them vices festering to despairs,

Or sorrows petrifying to vices: not A finger-touch of God left whole on them:

All ruined, lost—the countenance worn out

As the garments, the will dissolute as the acts.

The passions loose and draggling in the dirt

To trip the foot up at the first free As louder phrases thrown out by the step!-

Those, faces! 'twas as if you had stirred up hell

To heave its lowest dreg-fiends uppermost

In fierv strangled fronts,

Such obdurate jaws were thrown up constantly,

To twit you with your race, corrupt your blood,

And grind to devilish colours all your

Henceforth . . . though, haply, you should drop asleep

By clink of silver waters, in a muse On Raffael's mild "Madonna of the Bird."

I've waked and slept through many nights and days

Since then,—but still that day will catch my breath

Like a nightmare. There are fatal days, indeed,

In which the fibrous years have taken

So deeply, that they quiver to their

Whene'er you stir the dust of such a day.

My cousin met me with his eyes and hand.

And then, with just a word, . . . that | " Marian Erle

Was coming with her bridesmaids presently,"

Made haste to place me by the altarstair.

Wiped clean of mother's milk by Where he and other noble gentlemen And high-born ladies, waited for the bride.

> We waited. It was early: there was time

> For greeting, and the morning's compliment:

> And gradually a ripple of women's

Arose and fell, and tossed about a spray

Of English s's, soft as a silent hush,

And, notwithstanding, quite as audible

-" Yes, really, if we've need to wait in church.

We've need to talk there."—" She? 'Tis Lady Ayr,

swirls of slime,—such In blue—not purple! that's the dowager." -" She looks as young."-" She

flirts as young, you mean!

Why if you had seen her upon Thursday night, You'd call Miss Norris modest."-

" You again! I waltzed with you three hours back.

Up at six, Up still at ten: scarce time to change

one's shoes. I feel as white and sulky as a ghost, So pray don't speak to me, Lord

Belcher."—" No. I'll look at you instead, and it's

enough While you have that face." "In

church, my lord! fie, fie!" " Adair, you stayed for the Division?" --" Lost

By one." "The devil it is! I'm sorry for't.

And if I had not promised Mistress Grove".

"You might have kept your word to Liverpool."

"Constituents must remember, after

We're mortal."-" We remind them of it."-" Hark.

The bride comes! Here she comes, in a stream of milk!

There? Dear, you are asleep still; don't you know

The five Miss Granvilles? always dressed in white

To show they're ready to be married." -" Lower!

The aunt is at your elbow."—" Lady Maud,

Did Lady Waldemar tell you she had seen

This girl of Leigh's ? " " No,-wait! 'twas Mrs. Brookes.

Who told me Lady Waldemar told

No, 'twasn't Mrs. Brookes."-" She's pratty?"-" Who?

Mrs. Brookes? Lady Waldemar?"— " How hot!

Pray is't the law to-day we're not to breathe?

You're treading on my shawl—I thank you, sir.'

-" They say the bride's a mere child, who can't read,

But knows the things she shouldn't, with wide-awake

Great eyes. I'd go through fire to look at her."

-" You do, I think."-" And Lady Waldemar

(You see her; sitting close to Romney Leigh;

How beautiful she looks, a little flushed!)

Has taken up the girl, and organ-

Leigh's folly. Should I have come here, you suppose,

Except she'd asked me?"-" She'd have served him more

By marrying him herself."
"Ah—there she comes, The bride, at last!"

"Indeed, no. Past eleven. She puts off her patched petticoat to-

And puts on Mayfair manners, so

By setting us to wait."-" Yes, yes, this Leigh

Was always odd; it s in the blood. I think;

His father's uncle's cousin's second son

Was, was . . . you understand meand for him,

He's stark !—has turned quite lunatic upon

This modern question of the poorthe poor:

An excellent subject when you're moderate:

You've seen Prince Albert's model lodging-house?

Does honour to his Royal Highness. Good!

But would he stop his carriage in Cheapside To shake a common fellow by the fist

Whose name was . . . Shakspeare? no. We draw a line,

And if we stand not by our order, we In England, we fall headlong. Here's a sight,—

A hideous sight, a most indecent sight!

My wife would come, sir, or I had kept her back.

By heaven, sir, when poor Damiens' trunk and limbs

Were torn by horses, women of the Court

Stood by and stared, exactly as today

On this dismembering of society, With pretty troubled faces." " Now, at last.

She comes now." "Where? who sees? you

push me, sir, Beyond the point of what is mannerly. You're standing, madam, on my second flounce-

I do beseech you."

" No—it's not the bride. Half-past eleven. How late. The bridegroom, mark,

Gets anxious and goes out.

"And as I said . . . These Leighs! our best blood running in the rut!

It's something awful. We had pardoned him

A simple misalliance, got up aside For a pair of sky-blue eyes; our

House of Lords Has winked at such things, and we've

all been young. But here's an inter-marriage reasoned

out. A contract (carried boldly to the light,

To challenge observation, pioneer Good acts by a great example) 'twixt the extremes

Of martyrised society,—on the left, merest mob,

To treat as equals !- 'tis anarchical! Whom authors dine with and forget It means more than it says-'tis damnable!

Why, sir, we can't have even our But no-wise certain . . . now here and coffee good,

Unless we strain it."

"Here, Miss Leigh!" " Lord Howe,

You're Romney's friend. What's all this waiting for?"

"I cannot tell. The bride has lost her head

(And way, perhaps!) to prove her sympathy

With the bridegroom."

"What,-you also, disapprove!"

"Oh, I approve of nothing in the May warm audacious hands in passing world.

He answered; " not of you, still less of me,

Nor even of Romney-though he's worth us both.

We're all gone wrong. The tune in us is lost:

And whistling in back alleys to the moon,

Will never catch it."

Let me draw Lord Howe: A born aristocrat, bred Radical. And educated Socialist, who still

Goes floating, on traditions of his kind,

Across the theoretic flood from France,-

Though, like a drenched Noah on a rotten deck.

Scarce safer for his place there. He, at least.

Will never land on Ararat, he knows, To recommence the world on the old

Indeed, he thinks, said world had better end;

He sympathises rather with the fish Outside, than with the drowned paired beasts within

Who cannot couple again or multiply: And that's the sort of Noah he is. Lord Howe.

Except a loyal, upright gentleman, The well-born,—on the right, the A liberal landlord, graceful diner-out, And entertainer more than hospitable.

the port.

Whatever he believes, and it is much, now there . . .

He still has sympathies beyond his creed.

Diverting him from action. In the House,

No party counts upon him, and all praise,

All like his books too (he has written

Which, good to lie beside a bishop's chair.

So oft outreach themselves with jets of fire

At which the foremost of the progressists

-Of stature over-tall, lounging for

Light hair, that seems to carry a wind in it,

And eyes that, when they look on you, will lean

Their whole weight half in indolence, and half

In wishing you unmitigated good, Until you know not if to flinch from

Or thank him,—'Tis Lord Howe. "We're all gone wrong,"

Said he, "and Romney, that dear friend of ours, Is no-wise right. There's one true

thing on earth;

That's love! He takes it up, and dresses it.

And acts a play with it, as Hamlet did, To show what cruel uncles we have been.

And how we should be uneasy in our minds,

While he, Prince Hamlet, weds a pretty maid

(Who keeps us too long waiting, we'll confess)

By symbol, to instruct us formally To fill the ditches up 'twixt class and class,

He never could be anything complete, And live together in phalansteries.

What then ?—he's mad, our Hamlet! clap his play,

And bind him."

"Ah, Lord Howe, this spectacle Pulls stronger at us than the Dane's. See there!

The crammed aisles heave and strain and steam with life—

Dear Heaven, what life!"

"Why, yes,—a poet sees; Which makes him different from a common man.

I, too, see somewhat, though I cannot sing:

I should have been a poet, only that My mother took fright at the ugly world,

And bore me tongue-tied. If you'll grant me now

That Romney gives us a fine actorpiece

To make us merry on his marriagemorn,

The fable's worse than Hamlet's, I'll concede.

The terrible people, old and poor and blind,

Their eyes eat out with plague and poverty

From seeing beautiful and cheerful sights,

We'll liken to a brutalised King Lear, Led out,—by no means to clear scores with wrongs—

His wrongs are so far back . . . he has forgot;

All's past like youth; but just to witness here

A simple contract,—he, upon his side.

And Regan with her sister Goneril And all the dappled courtiers and

court-fools,
On their side. Not that any of these
would say

They're sorry, neither. What is done, is done.

And violence is now turned privilege, As cream turns cheese, if buried long enough.

What could such lovely ladies have to do

With the old man there, in those illodorous rags,

Except to keep the wind-side of him?
Lear

Is flat and quiet, as a decent grave; He does not curse his daughters in the least.

Be these his daughters? Lear is thinking of

His porridge chiefly . . . is it getting cold

At Hampstead? will the ale be served in pots?

Poor Lear, poor daughters! Bravo, Romney's play!"

A murmur and a movement drew around;

A naked whisper touched us. Something wrong! What's wrong? The black crowd, as

an over-strained

Cord, quivered in vibrations, and I

saw . . .
Was that his face I saw? . . . his . . .

Romney Leigh's . . .

Which tossed a sudden horror like a sponge

Into all eyes,—while himself stood white upon

The topmost altar-stair, and tried to speak, And failed, and lifted higher above his

head

A letter... as a man who drowns

and gasps.

"My brothers, bear with me! I am very weak.

I meant but only good. Perhaps I

I meant but only good. Perhaps I meant
Too proudly,—and God snatched the

circumstance
And changed it therefore. There's

no marriage—none.

She leaves me,—she departs,—she

disappears,—

lose her Vet I rever forced her 'Arr'

I lose her. Yet I never forced her 'Ay,'
To have her 'No' so cast into my
teeth,

In manner of an accusation, thus.

My friends, you are all dismissed. Go,
eat and drink

According to the programme,—and, farewell!"

He ended. There was silence in the church;

We heard a baby sucking in its sleep At the farthest end of the aisle. Then spoke a man, " Now, look to it, coves, that all the beef and drink

Be not filched from us like the other

For beer's spilt easier than a woman

This gentry is not honest with the poor;

They bring us up, to trick us."-" Go it, Jim," A woman screamed back.—" I'm a

tender soul; I never banged a child at two years

old

And drew blood from him, but I sobbed for it

Next moment,—and I've had a plague of seven.

I'm tender: I've no stomach even for

Until I know about the girl that's lost,

That's killed, mayhap. I did misdoubt, at first,

The fine lord meant no good by her.

He, maybe, got the upper hand of her By holding up a wedding-ring, and then . .

A choking finger on her throat, last night.

And just a clever tale to keep us still, As she is, poor lost innocent. 'Disappear!'

Who ever disappears except a ghost? And who believes a story of a ghost? Iask you,—would a girl go off, instead Of staying to be married? a fine tale! A wicked man, I say, a wicked man! For my part I would rather starve on gin

Than make my dinner on his beef and beer."-

At which a cry rose up—" We'll have our rights.

ladies there

Are married safely and smoothly every day,

And she shall not drop through into a As men in dreams, who vainly inter-

Because she's poor and of the people: shame!

We'll have no tricks played off by gentlefolks;

We'll see her righted."

Through the rage and roar I heard the broken words which Romney flung

Among the turbulent masses, from the ground

He held still, with his masterful pale face-

As huntsmen throw the ration to the pack.

Who, falling on it headlong, dog on

In heaps of fury, rend it, swallow it

With yelling hound-jaws,-his indignant words.

His piteous words, his most pathetic words.

Whereof I caught the meaning here and there

By his gesture . . . torn in morsels, velled across.

And so devoured. From end to end. the church

Rocked round us like the sea in storm. and then

Broke up like the earth in earthquake. Men cried out

"Police!"-and women stood and shrieked for God.

Or dropt and swooned; or, like a herd of deer

(For whom the black woods suddenly grow alive,

Unleashing their wild shadows down the wind

To hunt the creatures into corners, back

And forward), madly fled, or blindly

Trod screeching underneath the feet of those

Who fled and screeched.

The last sight left to me Was Romney's terrible calm face above

We'll have the girl, the girl! Your The tumult!—the last sound was " Pull him down!

Strike-kill him!" Stretching my unreasoning arms,

'Twixt gods and their undoing, with a CTY

I struggled to precipitate myself Head-foremost to the rescue of my soul

In that white face, . . . till some one caught me back,

And so the world went out,—I felt no

What followed, was told after by Lord Howe,

Who bore me senseless from the strangling crowd

In church and street, and then returned alone

To see the tumult quelled. The men Had fallen as thunder on a roaring

And made all silent,—while the

people's smoke

Passed eddying slowly from the emptied aisles.

Here's Marian's letter, which a ragged child

the porch

Looked out expectant of the bride. He sent

The letter to me by his friend Lord There might be truth betwixt us two, Howe

Some two hours after, folded in a If nothing else. And yet 'twas dan-

On which his well-known hand had left a word.

Here's Marian's letter.

"Noble friend, dear saint, Be patient with me. Never think me

Who might to-morrow morning be vour wife

But that I loved you more than such

Farewell, my Romney. Let me write it once,-

My Romney.

" 'Tis so pretty a coupled word, I have no heart to pluck it with a blot. We say 'my God' sometimes, upon our knees.

Who is not therefore vexed: so bear with it . . .

And me. I know I'm foolish, weak. and vain;

Yet most of all I'm angry with myself For losing your last footstep on the stair.

That last time of your coming,yesterday!

The very first time I lost step of yours

(Its sweetness comes the next to what you speak).

But yesterday sobs took me by the throat.

And cut me off from music.

" Mister Leigh, You'll set me down as wrong in many things.

You've praised me, sir, for truth, and now you'll learn

I had not courage to be rightly true. I once began to tell you how she came, The woman . . . and you stared upon the floor

In one of your fixed thoughts . . . which put me out

For that day. After, someone spoke of me,

So wisely, and of you, so tenderly, Persuading me to silence for your sake . . .

Brought running, just as Romney at Well, well! it seems this moment I was wrong

In keeping back from telling you the truth:

at least.

gerous.

Suppose a real angel came from heaven

To live with men and women! he'd go

If no considerate hand should tie a blind Across his piercing eyes. 'Tis thus

with you: You see us too much in your heavenly

light; I always thought so, angel,—and

indeed There's danger that you beat yourself

to death Against the edges of this alien world.

In some divine and fluttering pity. It would be dreadful for a friend of

yours, To see all England thrust you out of

doors And mock you from the windows. You might say,

Or think (that's worse), 'There's some one in the house

I miss and love still.' Dreadful! " Very kind, I pray you mark, was Lady Walde- And that's my choice, observe. For

She came to see me nine times, rather An over-generous friend will care for ten-

So beautiful, she hurts me like the day Let suddenly on sick eyes.

" Most kind of all, Your cousin!-ah, most like you! Ere you came

She kissed me mouth to mouth: I felt her soul

Dip through her serious lips in holy fire.

God helpme, but it made me arrogant; I almost told her that you would not

By taking me to wife: though, ever since,

I've pondered much a certain thing

sort of mild

Derisive sadness . . . as a mother At hoping I should learn to write your asks

Her babe, 'You'll touch that star. you think?'

"Farewell! I know I never touched it.

"This is worst: Babes grow, and lose the hope of things above;

A silver threepence sets them leaping high-

But no more stars! mark that.

" I've writ all night, And told you nothing. God, if I could die.

And let this letter break off innocent Tust here! But no—for your sake...

"Here's the last, I never could be happy as your wife, I never could be harmless as your friend.

I never will look more into your face, Till God says, 'Look!' I charge you, seek me not,

Nor vex yourself with lamentable thoughts

That peradventure I have come to grief:

Be sure I'm well, I'm merry, I'm at

But such a long way, long way, long way off,

I think you'll find me sooner in my grave.

what remains.

And keep me happy . . . happier . . . "There's a blot!

This ink runs thick... we light girls lightly weep . . .

And keep me happier . . . was the thing to say, . .

Than as your wife I could be !—O, my

My saint, my soul! for surely you're my soul,

Through whom God touched me! I am not so lost

I cannot thank you for the good you

The tears you stopped, which fell she asked . . . | down bitterly, 'He loves you, Marian?' . . . in a Like these—the times you made me

weep for joy

notes

And save the tiring of your eyes, at night;

And most for that sweet thrice you kissed my lips

Saying 'Dear Marian.'

"'Twould be hard to read, This letter, for a reader half as learn'd. But you'll be sure to master it, in spite

Of ups and downs. My hand shakes, I am blind.

I'm poor at writing, at the best,—and

I tried to make my g's the way you showed.

Farewell — Christ love you. — Say ' poor Marian' now."

Poor Marian!-wanton Marian!was it so.

Or so? For days, her touching, foolish

We mused on with conjectural fantasy, As if some riddle of a summer-cloud On which one tries unlike similitudes Of now a spotted Hydra-skin cast off.

And now a screen of carven ivory That shuts the heavens' conventual

secrets up From mortals over-bold. We sought the sense:

She loved him so perhaps (such words mean love,)

That, worked on by some shrewd perfidious tongue

(And then I thought of Lady Waldemar),

She left him, not to hurt him; or perhaps

She loved one in her class, or did not love,

But mused upon her wild bad tramping life,

Until the free blood fluttered at her heart,

And black bread eaten by the roadside hedge Seemed sweeter than being put to

Romney's school

Of philanthropical self-sacrifice, Irrevocably.—Girls are girls, beside, Thought I, and like a wedding by one

rule.
You seldom catch these birds, except
with chaff:

They feel it almost an immoral thing
To go out and be married in broad
day,

Unless some winning special flattery should

Excuse them to themselves for't, . . . "No one parts

Her hair with such a silver line as you, One moonbeam from the forehead to the crown!"

Or else . . . "You bite your lip in such a way,

It spoils me for the smiling of the rest"—

And so on. Then a worthless gaud or two,

To keep for love,—a ribbon for the neck,

Or some glass pin,—they have their weight with girls.

And Romney sought her many days and weeks:

He sifted all the refuse of the town, Explored the trains, inquired among the ships,

And felt the country through from end to end;

No Marian!—Though I hinted what I knew.—

A friend of his had reasons of her own

For throwing back the match—he would not hear:

The lady had been ailing ever since, The shock had harmed her. Something in his tone

Repressed me; something in me

shamed my doubt

To a sigh, repressed too. He went on to say

That, putting questions where his Marian lodged, He found she had received for visitors,

Besides himself and Lady Waldemar And, that once, me—a dubious woman dressed

Beyond us both. The rings upon her hands

Had dazed the children when she threw them pence;

"She wore her bonnet as the queen might hers, To show the crown," they said,—" a

scarlet crown
Of roses that had never been in bud."

When Romney told me that,—for

now and then He came to tell me how the search

advanced,
His voice dropped: I bent forward
for the rest:

The woman had been with her, it appeared,

At first from week to week, then day by day,

And last, 'twas sure . . .

I looked upon the ground To escape the anguish of his eyes, and asked

As low as when you speak to mourners new

Of those they cannot bear yet to call dead,
"If Marian had as much as named to

him
A certain Rose, an early friend of hers,

A certain Rose, an early triend of hers, A ruined creature."

"Never."—Starting up He strode from side to side about the room,

Most like some prisoned lion sprung awake,

Who has felt the desert sting him through his dreams.

"What was I to her, that she should tell me aught?"

A friend! was I a friend? I see all Poor Marian! 'twas a luckless day for clear.

Such devils would pull angels out of heaven.

Provided they could reach them; it's their pride;

And that's the odds 'twixt soul and body-plague!

The veriest slave who drops in Cairo's

sengers;

to infect,

And blow their bad breath in a sister's

As if they got some ease by it." I broke through.

"Some natures catch no plagues. I've read of babes Found whole and sleeping by the

spotted breast

Of one a full day dead. I hold it true As I'm a woman and know woman-

That Marian Erle, however lured from place,

Deceived in way, keeps pure in aim and heart.

As snow that's drifted from the gardenbank

To the open road."

'Twas hard to hear him laugh. "The figure's happy. Well—a dozen

And trampers will secure you presently A fine white snow-drift. Leave it there, your snow!

'Twill pass for soot ere sunset. Pure in aim?

She's pure in aim, I grant you,—like myself,

Who thought to take the world upon my back

To carry it o'er a chasm of social ill, And end by letting slip through impotence

A single soul, a child's weight in a soul, Straight down the pit of hell! yes, I and she

Have reason to be proud of our pure aims."

Then softly, as the last repenting

Of a thunder-shower, he added, "The When you and I talked, you were poor child;

her.

When first she chanced on my philanthropy."

He drew a chair beside me, and sate down:

And I, instinctively, as women use Before a sweet friend's grief, -when, in his ear.

Cries, 'Stand off from me,' to the pas- They hum the tune of comfort, though themselves

While these blotched souls are eager Most ignorant of the special words of such.

And quiet so and fortify his brain

And give it time and strength for feeling out

To reach the availing sense beyond that sound.—

Went murmuring to him, what, if written here,

Would seem not much, yet fetched him better help

Than, peradventure, if it had been more.

I've known the pregnant thinkers of this time.

And stood by breathless, hanging on their lips.

When some chromatic sequence of fine thought

In learned modulation phrased itself To an unconjectured harmony of truth.

And yet I've been more moved, more raised, I say,

By a simple word . . . a broken easy thing,

A three-years' infant might say after vou.-A look, a sigh, a touch upon the palm,

Which meant less than "I love you" . . . than by all

The full-voiced rhetoric of those master-mouths.

"Ah, dear Aurora," he began at last, His pale lips fumbling for a sort of smile,

"Your printer's devils have not spoilt your heart:

That's well. And who knows but, long years ago,

somewhat right

In being so peevish with me? You, at My cheeks had pined and perished

dreams! Instead.

You've helped the facile youth to live As dew on autumn cyclamens; alone youth's day

With innocent distraction, still per-

Suggestive of things better than your rhymes.

The little shepherd-maiden, eight years old,

I've seen upon the mountains of Vau-

Asleep i' the sun, her head upon her knees,

The flocks all scattered,—is more laudable

Than any sheep-dog trained imperfectly.

Who bites the kids through too much zeal."

"I look

As if I had slept, then?"

He was touched at once By something in my face. Indeed 'twas sure

That he and I,—despite a year or two Of younger life on my side, and on his. The heaping of the years' work on the days,-

The three-hour speeches from the member's seat.

The hot committees, in and out the House,

The pamphlets, "Arguments," "Collective Views,"

Tossed out as straw before sick houses,

To show one's sick and so be trod to dirt,

And no more use,-through this world's underground,

The burrowing, groping effort, whence the arm

And heart come bleeding,—sure, that he and I

Were, after all, unequally fatigued! That he, in his developed manhood, stood

A little sunburnt by the glare of life : While I . . . it seemed no sun had shone on me,

So many seasons I had forgot my Sets spinning in black circles, round Springs:

from their orbs.

Have ruined no one through your And all the youth-blood in them had grown white

> My eyes and forehead answered for my face.

> He said . . . "Aurora, vou changed-are ill!"

> "Not so, my cousin, -only not asleep!"

> I answered, smiling gently.

You scarcely found the poet of Vaucluse

As drowsy as the shepherds. What is art,

But life upon the larger scale, the higher.

When, graduating up in a spiral line Of still expanding and ascending gyres,

It pushes toward the intense signifi-

Of all things, hungry for the Infinite? Art's life, -and where we live, we suffer and toil."

He seemed to sift me with his painful eves.

" Alas! you take it gravely; you refuse

Your dreamland, right of common. and green rest. You break the mythic turf where

danced the nymphs,

With crooked ploughs of actual life.—

The axes to the legendary woods. To pay the head-tax. You are fallen indeed

On evil days, you poets, if yourselves Can praise that art of yours no otherwise;

And, if you cannot . . . better take a trade

And be of use! 'twere cheaper for your youth."

" Of use!" I softly echoed, "there's the point

We sweep about for ever in argument: Like swallows, which the exasperate, dying year

and round,

And we . . . where tend we?"

" Where?" he said, and sighed. "The whole creation, from the hour we are born.

Perplexes us with questions. Not a stone

But cries behind us, every weary step, 'Where, where?' I leave stones to reply to stones.

Enough for me and for my fleshly

To hearken the invocations of my kind. When men catch hold upon my shuddering nerves

And shriek, 'What help? what hope? what bread i' the house.

'What fire i' the frost?' There must be some response,

Though mine fail utterly. This social Sphinx.

Who sits between the sepulchres and

Makes mock and mow against the crystal heavens,

And bullies God, -exacts a word at

From each man standing on the side of God.

However paying a sphinx-price for it. We pay it also if we hold our peace, In pangs and pity. Let me speak and die.

Alas! you'll say, I speak and kill, instead."

I pressed in there; "The best men, doing their best,

Know peradventure least of what they do:

Men usefullest i' the world, are simply

The nail that holds the wood, must pierce it first, And He alone Who wields the

hammer, sees The work advanced by the earliest

blow. Take heart.

"Ah, if I could have taken yours!" he said.

"But that's past now." Then rising . . . " I will take

At least your kindness and encouragement.

Preparing for far flights o'er unknown I thank you. Dear, be happy. Sing your songs,

> If that's your way! but sometimes slumber too,

> Nor tire too much with following, out of breath.

> The rhymes upon your mountains of Delight.

Reflect, if Art be, in truth, the higher

You need the lower life to stand upon. In order to reach up into that higher; And none can stand a-tiptoe in the place

He cannot stand in with two stable feet.

Remember then !- for Art's sake, hold your life."

We parted so. I held him in respect. I comprehended what he was in heart And sacrificial greatness. Ay, but he Supposed me a thing too small to deign to know:

He blew me, plainly, from the crucible, As some intruding, interrupting fly

Not worth the pains of his analysis Absorbed on nobler subjects. Hurt a fly!

He would not for the world: he's pitiful

To flies even. "Sing," says he, "and tease me still.

If that's your way, poor insect." That's your way!

FIFTH BOOK

Aurora Leigh, be humble. Shall I hope

To speak my poems in mysterious tune

With man and nature, -with the lavalymph

That trickles from successive galaxies Still drop by drop adown the finger of God.

In still new worlds ?-with summerdays in this,

That scarce dare breathe, they are so beautiful?—

With spring's delicious trouble in the ground

Tormented by the quickened blood of roots,

And softly pricked by golden crocussheaves

In token of the harvest-time of flowers?—

With winters and with autumns,—and beyond,

With the human heart's large seasons,
—when it hopes
And fears, joys, grieves, and loves?—

with all that strain

Of sexual passion, which devours the flesh

In a sacrament of souls? with mother's breasts,

Which, round the new-made creatures hanging there,

Throb luminous and harmonious like pure spheres?—

With multitudinous life, and finally With the great out-goings of ecstatic souls,

Who, in a rush of too long prisoned flame,

Their radiant faces upward, burn away

This dark of the body, issuing on a world

Beyond our mortal?—can I speak my verse

So plainly in tune to these things and the rest,

That men shall feel it catch them on the quick,

As having the same warrant over them

To hold and move them, if they will or no,

Alike imperious as the primal rhythm Of that theurgic nature? I must fail, Who fail at the beginning to hold and move

One man,—and he my cousin, and he my friend,

And he born tender, made intelligent, Inclined to ponder the precipitous sides

Of difficult questions; yet, obtuse to me.—

Of me, incurious! likes me very well, And wishes me a paradise of good,

Good looks, good means, and good digestion!—ay,

But otherwise evades me, puts me off With kindness, with a tolerant gentle-

Too light a book for a grave man's reading! Go,

Aurora Leigh: be humble.

There it is;

We women are too apt to look to one, Which proves a certain impotence in art

We strain our natures at doing something great,

Far less because it's something great to do,

Than, haply, that we, so, commend ourselves .

As being not small, and more appreciable

To some one friend. We must have mediators

Betwixt our highest conscience and the judge; Some sweet saint's blood must

quicken in our palms, Or all the life in heaven seems slow

and cold:
Good only, being perceived as the end
of good.

And God alone pleased,—that's too poor, we think,

And not enough for us, by any means.

Ay—Romney, I remember, told me
once

We miss the abstract, when we comprehend!

We miss it most when we aspire . . . and fail.

Yet so, I will not.—This vile woman's way

Of trailing garments, shall not trip me up. I'll have no traffic with the personal

thought
In art's pure temple. Must I work
in vain,

Without the approbation of a man? It cannot be; it shall not. Fame itself.

That approbation of the general race, Presents a poor end (though the arrow speed,

Shot straight with vigorous finger to the white),

And the highest fame was never reached except

By what was aimed above it. Art for art,

And good for God Himself, the essential Good!

We'll keep our aims sublime, our eyes erect,

Although our woman-hands should A still more intimate humanity shake and fail;

And if we fail . . . But must we ?-Shall I fail?

The Greeks said grandly in their tragic phrase,

"Let no one be called happy till his death."

To which I add,—Let no one till his death

Be called unhappy. Measure not the work

Until the day's out and the labour done:

Then bring your gauges. If the day's work's scant,

Why, call it scant; affect no compromise:

And, in that we have nobly striven at

Deal with us nobly, women though we be.

And honour us with truth, if not with

My ballads prospered; but the ballad's race

Is rapid for a poet who bears weights Of thought and golden image. He can stand

Like Atlas, in the sonnet,—and sup-

His own heavens pregnant with dvnastic stars;

But then he must stand still, nor take a step.

In that descriptive poem called "The Hills."

The prospects were too far and indistinct.

'Tis true my critics said. "A fine view, that!"

The public scarcely cared to climb the book

For even the finest; and the public's

A tree's mere firewood, unless humanised;

Which well the Greeks knew, when they stirred the bark

With close-pressed bosoms of subsiding nymphs,

And made the forest-rivers garrulous With babble of gods. For us, we are With literal transcript,—the worse called to mark

In this inferior nature, -or, ourselves, Must fall like dead leaves trodden

underfoot By veritabler artists. Earth, shut up By Adam, like a fakir in a box

Left too long buried, remained stiff and dry,

A mere dumb corpse, till Christ the Lord came down.

Unlocked the doors, forced open the blank eyes,

And used His kingly chrisms to straighten out

The leathery tongue turned back into the throat:

Since when, she lives, remembers, palpitates

In every limb, aspires in every breath. Embraces infinite relations. Now,

We want no half-gods, Panomphæan Toves.

Fauns, Naiads, Tritons, Oreads and the rest,

To take possession of a senseless world To unnatural vampire-uses. See the earth.

The body of our body, the green earth, Indubitably human, like this flesh And these articulated veins through

which

Our heart drives blood! there's not a flower of spring,

That dies ere June, but vaunts itself allied

By issue and symbol, by significance And correspondence, to that spiritworld

Outside the limits of our space and time,

Whereto we are bound. Let poets give it voice

With human meanings; else they miss the thought,

And henceforth step down lower, stand confessed

Instructed poorly for interpreters,-Thrown out by an easy cowslip in the

Even so my pastoral failed: it was a book

surface-pictures-pretty, cold, Of and false

done, I think,

For being not ill-done. Let me set my mark

Against such doings, and do other-This strikes me.—If the public whom

we know.

Could catch me at such admissions, I should pass

For being right modest. Yet how proud we are,

In daring to look down upon ourselves !

The critics say that epics have died

With Agamemnon and the goatnursed gods-

I'll not believe it. I could never dream,

As Payne Knight did (the mythic mountaineer

Who travelled higher than he was - NOVY 17 born to live.

And showed sometimes the goitre in his throat

Discoursing of an image seen through

That Homer's heroes measured twelve feet high.

They were but men!—his Helen's hair turned grey

Like any plain Miss Smith's, who wears a front;

And Hector's infant blubbered at a plume

As yours last Friday at a turkey-cock. All men are possible heroes: every

Heroic in proportions, double-faced. Looks backward and before, expects a morn

And claims an epos.

Ay, but every age Appears to souls who live in it (ask Carlyle)

Most unheroic. Ours, for instance,

The thinkers scout it, and the poets abound

Who scorn to touch it with a finger-

A pewter age,—mixed metal, silverwashed;

An age of scum, spooned off the richer Past moat and drawbridge, into a past:

An age of patches for old gaberdines; Oh not to sing of lizards or of toads

An age of mere transition, meaning nought,

Except that what succeeds must shame it quite,

If God please. That's wrong thinking, to my mind,

And wrong thoughts make poor poems.

Every age,

Through being beheld too close, is illdiscerned By those who have not lived past it.

We'll suppose Mount Athos carved, as Persian

Xerxes schemed, To some colossal statue of a man:

The peasants, gathering brushwood in his ear,

Had guessed as little of any human form

Up there, as would a flock of browsing goats.

They'd have, in fact, to travel ten miles off

Or ere the giant image broke on them.

Full human profile, nose and chin distinct,

Mouth, muttering rhythms of silence up the sky.

And fed at evening with the blood of suns: Grand torso,—hand, that flung per-

petually The largesse of a silver river down

To all the country pastures. 'Tis even thus

With times we live in,—evermore too great

To be apprehended near.

But poets should Exert a double vision; should have eves

To see near things as comprehensively As if afar they took their point of sight,

And distant things, as intimately deep. As if they touched them. Let us strive for this.

I do distrust the poet who discerns No character or glory in his times,

And trundles back his soul five hundred years,

castle-court,

cusable;

But of some black chief, half knight, half sheep-lifter,

Some beauteous dame, half chattel and half queen,

As dead as must be, for the greater

The poems made on their chivalric

And that's no wonder: death inherits death.

Nay, if there's room for poets in this

A little overgrown (I think there is), Their sole work is to represent the age, Their age, not Charlemagne's,—this live, throbbing age,

That brawls, cheats, maddens, calcu-

lates, aspires, And spends more passion, more heroic

heat. Betwixt the mirrors of its drawing-

rooms. Than Roland with his knights, at

Roncesvalles. To flinch from modern varnish, coat

or flounce, Cry out for togas and the picturesque,

Is fatal,—foolish too. King Arthur's

Was commonplace to Lady Guenever: And Camelot to minstrels seemed as flat

As Regent Street to poets.

Never flinch. But still, unscrupulously epic, catch Upon the burning lava of a song, The full-veined, heaving, double-

breasted Age:

That, when the next shall come, the We're lost so! Shakspeare's ghost men of that

May touch the impress with reverent hand, and say

have sucked!

It sets ours beating. This is-living A wigless Hamlet would have failed

Which thus presents, and thus records true life."

What form is best for poems? Let me think

Alive i' the ditch there!—'twere ex- Of forms less, and the external. Trust the spirit,

> As sovran nature does, to make the form:

For otherwise we only imprison spirit, And not embody. Inward evermore To outward,—so in life, and so in art, Which still is life.

Five acts to make a play. And why not fifteen? why not ten? or seven?

What matter for the number of the leaves.

Supposing the tree lives and grows? exact

The literal unities of time and place. When 'tis the essence of passion to ignore

Both time and place? Absurd. Keep up the fire,

And leave the generous flames to shape themselves.

'Tis true the stage requires obsequiousness

To this or that convention; "exit"

And "enter" there; the points for clapping, fixed,

Like Jacob's white-peeled rods before the rams:

And all the close-curled imagery clipped

In manner of their fleece at shearing-

Forget to prick the galleries to the heart Precisely at the fourth act,—culmin-

Our five pyramidal acts with one act

more,-

could scarcely plead Against our just damnation. Stand aside:

** Behold,—behold the paps we all We'll muse for comfort that, last

century, That bosom seems to beat still, or at On this same tragic stage on which we have failed.

the same.

And whoseever writes good poetry, Looks just to art. He does not write for you

Orme,-for London orfor Edinburgh;

He will not suffer the best critic Of a modest phrase,—" My gentle known

thought And self-absorbed conception, and

exact

An inch-long swerving of the holy lines.

If virtue done for popularity

Defiles like vice, can art for praise or hire

Still keep its splendour, and remain pure art?

Eschew such serfdom. What the poet writes.

He writes: mankind accepts it, if it suits.

And that's success: if not, the poem's passed

hand to hand.

Until the unborn snatch it, crying out In pity on their fathers' being so dull, And that's success too.

I will write no plays. Because the drama, less sublime in

Makes lower appeals, defends more She'll hear the softest hum of Hymenially,

Adopts the standard of the public taste

To chalk its height on, wears a dogchain round

Its regal neck, and learns to carry and fetch

The fashions of the day to please the day;

Fawns close on pit and boxes, who clap hands,

Commending chiefly its docility And humour in stage-tricks; or else indeed

Gets hissed at, howled at, stamped at like a dog,

Or worse, we'll say. For dogs, unjustly kicked.

Yell, bite at need; but if your dramatist

nobodies

Because their grosser brains most naturally

Misjudge the fineness of his subtle wit)

Shows teeth an almond's breadth, protests the length

countrymen.

To step into his sunshine of free There's something in it, haply, of your fault,"-

Why then, besides five hundred nobodies.

He'll have five thousand, and five thousand more,

Against him,—the whole public,—all the hoofs

Of King Saul's father's asses, in full drove,-And obviously deserve it.

pealed To these,—and why say more if they

condemn. Than if they praised him?—Weep,

my Æschylus, But low and far, upon Sicilian shores!

From hand to hand, and yet from For since 'twas Athens (so I read the myth)

Who gave commission to that fatal weight.

The tortoise, cold and hard, to drop on thee

And crush thee.—better cover thy bald head:

blan bee Before thy loudest protestation.

Then The risk's still worse upon the modern

stage: I could not, in so little, accept success.

Nor would I risk so much, in ease and calm,

For manifester gains; let those who prize,

Pursue them: I stand off.

And yet, forbid, That any irreverent fancy or conceit Should litter in the Drama's throneroom, where

The rulers of our heart, in whose full veins

Dynastic glories mingle, sit in strength And do their kingly work,—conceive, command,

(Being wronged by some five hundred | And, from the imagination's crucial heat,

Catch up their men and women all aflame

For action, all alive, and forced to prove

Their life by living out heart, brain, and nerve.

Until mankind makes witness, "These be men

As we are," and vouchsafes the kiss that's due

To Imogen and Juliet—sweetest kin On art's side.

'Tis that, honouring to its worth The drama, I would fear to keep it down

To the level of the footlights. Dies no more

The sacrificial goat, for Bacchus slain,—

His filmed eyes fluttered by the whirling white

Of choral vestures, troubled in his blood,

While tragic voices that clanged keen as swords,

Leapt high together with the altarflame,

And made the blue air wink. The waxen mask,

Which set the grand still front of Themis' son

Upon the puckered visage of a player;—

The buskin, which he rose upon and moved.

As some tall ship, first conscious of the wind,

Sweeps slowly past the piers;—the mouthpiece, where

The mere man's voice with all its breaths and breaks

Went sheathed in brass, and clashed on even heights

Its phrased thunders;—these things are no more,
Which once were. And concluding,

which is clear,
The growing drama has outgrown

The growing drama has outgrown such toys
Of simulated stature, face, and speech,

It also, peradventure, may outgrow The simulation of the painted scene, Boards, actors, prompters, gaslight, and costume:

And take for a worthier stage the soul itself.

Its shifting fancies and celestial lights, With all its grand orchestral silences To keep the pauses of the rhythmic sounds.

Alas, I still see something to be done,

And what I do falls short of what I see Though I waste myself on doing. Long green days.

Worn bare of grass and sunshine,—
long calm nights,

From which the silken sleeps were fretted out.—

Be witness for me, with no amateur's Irreverent haste and busy idleness I've set myself to art! What then?

what's done? What's done, at last?

Behold, at last, a book.

If life-blood's necessary,—which it is, (By that blue vein athrob on Mahomet's brow,

Each prophet-poet's book must show man's blood!)

If life-blood's fertilising, I wrung mine

On every leaf of this,—unless the drops

Slid heavily on one side and left it dry.

That chances often: many a fervid man

Writes books as cold and flat as graveyard stones

From which the lichen's scraped; and if St. Preux

Had written his own letters, as he might,

We had never wept to think of the little mole

'Neath Julie's drooping eyelid. Passion is

But something suffered, after all.
While Art

Sets action on the top of suffering:
The artist's part is both to be and
do,

Transfixing with a special, central power

The flat experience of the common man.

And turning outward, with a sudden wrench,

Half agony, half ecstasy, the thing He feels the inmost: never felt the less

Because he sings it. Does a torch less burn

For burning next reflectors of blue steel.

That he should be the colder for his place

'Twixt two incessant fires,—his personal life's.

burns back

Perpetually against him from the round

Of crystal conscience he was born into If artist-born? O sorrowful great

Conferred on poets, of a twofold life, When one life has been found enough for pain!

We, staggering 'neath our burden as mere men.

Being called to stand up straight as demi-gods.

Support the intolerable strain and stress

Of the universal, and send clearly up With voices broken by the human

Our poems to find rhymes among the stars!

But soft !—a "poet" is a word soon said:

A book's a thing soon written. Nay, indeed.

The more the poet shall be question-

The more unquestionably comes his book !

And this of mine—well, granting to myself

Some passion in it, furrowing up the flats,

Mere passion will not prove a volume worth

Its gall and rags even. Bubbles round a keel

Mean nought, excepting that the vessel moves.

There's more than passion goes to make a man.

Or book, which is a man too.

I am sad. I wonder if Pygmalion had these doubts,

And, feeling the hard marble first relent. Grow supple to the straining of his

And tingle through its cold to his burning lip,

Supposed his senses mocked, and that the toil

Of stretching past the known and seen, to reach

And that intense refraction which The archetypal Beauty out of sight, Had made his heart beat fast enough for two.

And with his own life dazed and blinded him!

Not so; Pygmalion loved,—and whoso

Believes the impossible.

And I am sad: I cannot thoroughly love a work of mine.

Since none seems worthy of my thought and hope

More highly mated. He has shot them down. My Phœbus Apollo, soul within my

soul. Who judges, by the attempted, what's

attained. And with the silver arrow from his height,

Has struck down all my works before my face,

While I said nothing. Is there aught to say? I called the artist but a greatened

man:

He may be childless also, like a man.

I laboured on alone. The wind and dust And sun of the world beat blistering

in my face; And hope, now for me, now against

me, dragged My spirits onward,—as some fallen

balloon, Which, whether caught by blossoming tree or bare,

Is torn alike. I sometimes touched my aim,

Or seemed,—and generous souls cried out, " Be strong,

Take courage; now you're on our level, -now!

The next step saves you!" I was flushed with praise,

But, pausing just a moment to draw breath.

I could not choose but murmur to myself

" Is this all? all that's done? and all that's gained?

If this then be success, 'tis dismaller

Than any failure."

O my God, my God, O supreme Artist, Who as sole return For all the cosmic wonder of Thy work.

Demandest of us just a word . . . a

name. "My Father!"-Thou hast know-

ledge, only Thou,

How dreary 'tis for women to sit still On winter nights by solitary fires,

And hear the nations praising them far off.

Too far! av, praising our quick sense of love,

Our very heart of passionate womanhood.

Which could not beat so in the verse without

Being present also in the unkissed lips, And eyes undried because there's none to ask

The reason they grew moist.

To sit alone.

And think, for comfort, how, that Means simply love. It was a man very night.

Affianced lovers, leaning face to face And then, there's love and love: the With sweet half-listenings for each other's breath,

Are reading haply from some page of

To pause with a thrill, as if their cheeks had touched.

When such a stanza, level to their mood,

Seems floating their own thought out —" So I feel

For thee,"-" And I, for thee: this poet knows

What everlasting love is!"—how. that night.

A father, issuing from the misty roads Upon the luminous round of lamp and hearth

And happy children, having caught up first

The youngest there until it shrunk

and shrieked To feel the cold chin prick its dimples

through With winter from the hills, may throw i' the lap

Of the eldest (who has learnt to drop

To hide some sweetness newer than last year's)

Our book and cry, . . . " Ah you, you care for rhymes:

So here be rhymes to pore on under trees.

When April comes to let you! been told

They are not idle as so many are,

But set hearts beating pure as well as fast:

It's yours, the book: I'll write your name in it,-

That so you may not lose, however lost

In poet's lore and charming reverie, The thought of how your father thought of you

In riding from the town."

To have our books Appraised by love, associated with love.

While we sit loveless! is it hard, you think?

At least 'tis mournful. Fame, indeed, 'twas said.

said that.

love of all

(To risk, in turn, a woman's paradox.) Is but a small thing to the love of one. You bid a hungry child be satisfied With a heritage of many corn-fields:

He says he's hungry,—he would rather have

That little barley-cake you keep from him

While reckoning up his harvests. So with us:

(Here, Romney, too, we fail to generalise!)

We're hungry.

Hungry! but it's pitiful To wail like unweaned babes and suck our thumbs

Because we're hungry. Who, in all this world

(Wherein we are haply set to pray and

And learn what good is by its opposite)

Has never hungered? Woe to him who has found

The meal enough! if Ugolino's full. His teeth have crunched some foul unnatural thing:

For here satiety proves penury More utterly irremediable. And since

man's love,

Than God's truth! better, for companions sweet,

Than great convictions! let us bear our weights,

Preferring dreary hearths to desert souls.

Well, well! they say we're envious, we who rhyme;

But I, because I am a woman perhaps, And so rhyme ill, am ill at envy-

I never envied Graham his breadth of style,

Which gives you, with a random smutch or two

(Near-sighted critics analyse smutch),

Such delicate perspectives of full life; Nor Belmore, for the unity of aim To which he cuts his cedarn poems,

As sketchers do their pencils; nor Mark Gage,

For that caressing colour and trancing tone

Whereby you're swept away and melted in

The sensual element, which, with a back wave,

Restores you to the level of pure souls And leaves you with Plotinus. None of these,

For native gifts or popular applause, I've envied; but for this,—that when, by chance,

Says some one,-" There goes Belmore, a great man!

He leaves clean work behind him, and requires

No sweeper up of the chips,"...a girl I know,

Who answers nothing, save with her brown eyes,

Smiles unaware, as if a guardian saint Smiled in her:—for this, too,—that Gage comes home

And lays his last book's prodigal review

Upon his mother's knees, where, years ago,

He had laid his childish spellingbook and learned

To chirp and peck the letters from her mouth,

We needs must hunger,-better, for As young birds must. "Well done." she murmured then,

> She will not say it now more wonderingly;

> And yet the last "Well done" will touch him more,

> As catching up to-day and yesterday In a perfect chord of love; and so. Mark Gage,

> I envy you your mother !- and you, Graham,

> Because you have a wife who loves

She half forgets, at moments, to be

Of being Graham's wife, until a friend observes,

"The boy here, has his father's massive brow,

Done small in wax . . . if we push back the curls."

Who loves me? Dearest father,mother sweet,-

I speak the names out sometimes by myself,

And make the silence shiver: they sound strange,

As Hindostanee to an Ind-born

Accustomed many years to English speech;

Or lovely poet-words grown obsolete. Which will not leave off singing. Up in heaven

I have my father,—with my mother's

Beside him in a blotch of heavenly light;

No more for earth's familiar, household use.

No more! The best verse written by this hand,

Can never reach them where they sit, to seem

Well-done to them. Death quite unfellows us.

Sets dreadful odds betwixt the live and dead.

And makes us part as those at Babel did,

Through sudden ignorance of a common tongue.

A living Cæsar would not dare to play

father is.

And yet, this may be less so than appears,

This change and separation. Sparrows five

For just two farthings, and God cares tor each.

If God is not too great for little cares.

Is any creature, because gone to God? I've seen some men, veracious, nowise mad.

Who have thought or dreamed, declared and testified,

They've heard the Dead a-ticking like a clock

Which strikes the hours of the eternities.

Beside them, with their natural ears, -and known

That human spirits feel the human

And hate the unreasoning awe which waves them off

From possible communion. It may be.

At least, earth separates as well as heaven.

For instance, I have not seen Romney Leigh

Full eighteen months . . . add six, you get two years.

They say he's very busy with good works.-

Has parted Leigh Hall into almshouses. He made an almshouse of his heart

one day, Which ever since is loose upon the

latch

For those who pull the string.—I never did.

It always makes me sad to go abroad; And now I'm sadder that I went tonight

Among the lights and talkers at Lord Howe's.

His wife is gracious, with her glossy braids,

And even voice, and gorgeous eyeballs, calm

As her other jewels. If she's some- | Her maid must use both hands to what cold.

At bowls, with such as my dead Who wonders, when her blood has stood so long

> In the ducal reservoir she calls her line

> By no means arrogantly? she's not proud;

> Not prouder than the swan is of the lake

> He has always swum in ,—'tis her element,

> And so she takes it with a natural grace,

> Ignoring tadpoles. She just knows, perhaps.

> There are men, move on without outriders.

Which isn't her fault. Ah, to watch her face,

When good Lord Howe expounds his theories

Of social justice and equality—

'Tis curious, what a tender, tolerant bend

Her neck takes: for she loves him, like his talk,

"Such clever talk-that dear, odd Algernon!"

She listens on, exactly as if he talked Some Scandinavian myth of Lemures, Too pretty to dispute, and too absurd.

She's gracious to me as her husband's friend.

And would be gracious, were I not a Leigh,

Being used to smile just so, without her eyes,

On Joseph Strangways, the Leeds mesmerist.

And Delia Dobbs, the lecturer from "the States"

Upon the "Woman's Question." Then, for him.

I like him . . . he's my friend. And all the rooms

Were full of crinkling silks that swept about

The fine dust of most subtle courtesies. What then ?-why then, we come home to be sad.

How lovely One I love not, looked to-night!

She's very pretty, Lady Waldemar. twist that coil

Of tresses, then be careful lest the rich Bronze rounds should slip:—she missed, though, a grey hair,

A single one,—I saw it; otherwise
The woman looked immortal. How
they told,

Those alabaster shoulders and bare breasts,

On which the pearls, drowned out of sight in milk,

Were lost, excepting for the rubyclasp!

They split the amaranth velvetbodice down

To the waist, or nearly, with the audacious press

Of full-breathed beauty. If the heart within

Were half as white !—but, if it were, perhaps

The breast were closer covered, and the sight

Less aspectable, by half, too.

The young man with the German student's look—

A sharp face, like a knife in a cleft stick,

Which shot up straight against the parting line

So equally dividing the long hair,— Say softly to his neighbour (thirtyfive

And mediæval), ** Look that way, Sir Blaise.

She's Lady Waldemar—to the left, in red—

Whom Romney Leigh, our ablest man just now,

Is soon about to marry."

Then replied Sir Blaise Delorme, with quiet, priest-like voice.

Too used to syllable damnations round

To make a natural emphasis worth while:

Is Leigh your ablest man? the same, I think,

Once jilted by a recreant pretty maid Adopted from the people? Now, in change,

He seems to have plucked a flower from the other side

Of the social hedge."

"A flower, a flower," exclaimed

My German student,—his own eyes full-blown

Bent on her. He was twenty, certainly.

Sir Blaise resumed with gentle arrogance,

As if he had dropped his alms into a hat,

And had the right to counsel,—"My young friend,

I doubt your ablest man's ability To get the least good or help meet for him,

For pagan phalanstery or Christian home,

From such a flowery creature."

"Beautiful!"

My student murmured, rapt,—

"Mark how she stirs!

Just waves her head, as if a flower

indeed,
Touched far off by the vain breath
of our talk."

At which that bilious Grimwald (he who writes

For the Renovator), who had seemed absorbed

Upon the table-book of autographs (I dare say mentally he crunched the bones

Of all those writers, wishing them alive

To feel his tooth in earnest), turned short round

With low carnivorous laugh,—" A flower, of course!

She neither sews nor spins,—and takes no thought

Of her garments . . . falling off."

The student flinched, Sir Blaise, the same; then both, drawing back their chairs

As if they spied black-beetles on the floor,

Pursued their talk, without a word being thrown

To the critic,

Good Sir Blaise's brow is high And noticeably narrow: a strong wind,

You fancy, might unroof him suddenly,

And blow that great top attic off his head

So piled with feudal relics. You ad- Your intermittent rushlight of the

His nose in profile, though you miss From draughts in lobbies? Prejuhis chin;

But, though you miss his chin, you seldom miss

His golden cross worn innermostly (carved

For penance, by a saintly Styrian monk

Whose flesh was too much with him), slipping through

Some unaware unbuttoned casualty Of the under-waistcoat. With an absent air

Sir Blaise sate fingering it and speaking low,

While I, upon the sofa, heard it all.

"My dear young friend, if we could bear our eyes

Like blessedest St. Lucy, on a plate, They would not trick us into choosing wives,

As doublets, by the colour. Otherwise

Our fathers chose,—and therefore, when they had hung

Their household keys about a lady's

The sense of duty gave her dignity: She kept her bosom hely to her babes:

And, if a moralist reproved her dress, 'Twas, 'Too much starch!'— and not. 'Too little lawn!'"

"Now, pshaw!" returned the other in a heat,

A little fretted by being called " young friend, Or so I took it,—"for St. Lucy's

sake. If she's the saint to curse by, let us

Our fathers,—plagued enough about

our sons!" (He stroked his beardless chin) "yes, plagued, sir, plagued:

The future generations lie on us As heavy as the nightmare of a seer; Our meat and drink grow painful prophecy:

I ask you,—have we leisure, if we liked.

To hollow out our weary hands to keep

dice of sex, And marriage-laws . . . the socket

drops them through While we two speak,—however may

protest Some over-delicate nostrils, like your

'Gainst odours thence arising." "You are young,"

Sir Blaise objected.

'If I am," he said With fire,—" though somewhat less so than I seem,

The young run on before, and see the thing

That's coming. Reverence for the young, I cry.

In that new church for which the world's near ripe,

You'll have the younger in the Elder's chair, Presiding with his ivory front of

hope O'er foreheads clawed by cruel carrion-birds

Of life's experience."

" Pray your blessing, sir." Sir Blaise replied good-humouredly, -" I plucked

A silver hair this morning from my beard.

Which left me your inferior. Would I were

Eighteen, and worthy to admonish you! If young men of your order run be-

fore To see such sights as sexual preju-

dice

And marriage-law dissolved,-in plainer words,

A general concubinage expressed In a universal pruriency,—the thing

Is scarce worth running fast for, and you'd gain

By loitering with your elders."

"Ah," he said, "Who, getting to the top of Pisgahhill,

Can talk with one at bottom of the view.

To make it comprehensible? Why,

Himself, although our ablest man, I said.

Is scarce advanced to see as far as this, Which some are: he takes up imperfectly

The social question—by one handle—leaves

The rest to trail. A Christian Socialist,

Is Romney Leigh, you understand."
"Not I.
I disbelieve in Christian-pagans,

nuch
As you in women-fishes. If we mix

Two colours, we lose both, and make a third

Distinct from either. Mark you! to mistake

A colour is the sign of a sick brain, And mine, I thank the saints, is clear and cool:

A neutral tint is here impossible.

The church,—and by the church, I mean, of course,

The catholic, apostolic, motherchurch,—

Draws lines as plain and straight as her own wall;

Inside of which, are Christians, obviously,

And outside . . . dogs."

"We thank you. Well I know The ancient mother-church would fain still bite,

For all her toothless gums,—as Leigh himself

Would fain be a Christian still, for all his wit;

Pass that; you two may settle it, for me.

You're slow in England. In a month I learnt

At Göttingen, enough philosophy To stock your English schools for fifty years;

Pass that, too. Here, alone, I stop you short,

-Supposing a true man like Leigh could stand

Unequal in the stature of his life
To the height of his opinions. Choose
a wife

Because of a smooth skin?—not he, not he!

He'd rail at Venus' self for creaking shoes,

Unless she walked his way of righteousness:

And if he takes a Venus Meretrix (No imputation on the lady there),

Be sure that, by some sleight of Christian art,

He has metamorphosed and converted her

To a Blessed Virgin."

"Soft!" Sir Blaise drew breath As if it hurt him,—"Soft! no blasphemy,

I pray you!"

"The first Christians did the thing; Why not the last?" asked he of Göttingen,

With just that shade of sneering on the lip,
Compensates for the lagging of the

beard,—

"And so the case is. If that fairest

fair
Is talked of as the future wife of Leigh,
She's talked of, too, at least as cer-

She's talked of, too, at least as certainly,

As Leigh's disciple. You may find

As Leigh's disciple. You may find her name

On all his missions and commissions, schools,

Asylums, hospitals,—he has had her down, With other ladies whom her starry

lead Persuaded from their spheres, to his

country-place
In Shropsh.re, to the famed phalanstery

At Leigh Hall, Christianised from Fourier's own

(In which he has planted out his sapling stocks

Of knowledge into social nurseries), And there, they say, she has tarried

half a week,

And milked the cows, and churned,

and pressed the curd, And said 'my sister' to the lowest

drab
Of all the assembled castaways;

such girls!

Ay, sided with them at the washingtub— Conceive, Sir Blaise, those naked

perfect arms, Round glittering arms, plunged elbow-

deep in suds.

Tike wild swans hid in lilies all Pray give it; she has energies. a-shake."

Lord Howe came up. "What, talking poetry

So near the image of the unfavouring Muse?

That's you, Miss Leigh: I've watched you half an hour,

Precisely as I watched the statue called

A 'Pallas' in the Vatican; -you mind

The face, Sir Blaise?-intensely calm and sad,

As wisdom cut it off from fellowship.-But that spoke louder. Not a word from you!

And these two gentlemen were bold, I marked,

And unabashed by even your silence." " Ah."

Said I. "my dear Lord Howe, you shall not speak

To a printing woman who has lost her

(The sweet safe corner of the household fire Behind the heads of children), com-

pliments. As if she were a woman. We who

have clipt The curls before our eyes, may see at

As plain as men do: speak out, man

to man; No compliments, beseech you."

" Friend to friend, Let that be. We are sad to-night, I saw

(-Good-night, Sir Blaise! Ah, Smith—he has slipped away),

I saw you across the room, and stayed, Miss Leigh,

To keep a crowd of lion-hunters off, With faces toward your jungle. There were three:

A spacious lady, five feet ten and fat, Who has the devil in her (and there's room)

For walking to and fro upon the earth, From Chippewa to China; she requires

Your autograph upon a tinted leaf 'Twixt Queen Pomare's' and Emperor Soulouque's;

though fat:

For me. I'd rather see a rick on fire Than such a woman angry. Then a youth

Fresh from the backwoods, green as the under-boughs,

Asks modestly, Miss Leigh, to kiss your shoe,

And adds, he has an epic, in twelve parts.

Which when you've read, you'll do it for his boot,-

All which I saved you, and absorb next week

Both manuscript and man, because a lord

Is still more potent than a poetess, With any extreme republican. Ah, ah.

You smile at last, then."

"Thank you."

"Leave the smile.

I'll lose the thanks for't,—av, and throw you in My transatlantic girl, with golden

eves. That draws you to her splendid

whiteness, as The pistil of a water-lily draws,

Adust with gold. Those girls across the sea

Are tyrannously pretty,—and I swore

(She seemed to me an innocent, frank girl)

To bring her to you for a woman's kiss, Not now, but on some other day or week:

-We'll call it perjury; I give her up."

" No, bring her."

"Now," said he, "you make it hard

To touch such goodness with a grimy palm.

I thought to tease you well, and fret vou cross.

And steel myself, when rightly vexed with you.

For telling you a thing to tease you. more.

" Of Romney?"

"No, no; nothing worse," he cried,

"Of Romney Leigh, than what is buzzed about,-

That he is taken in an eye-trap too, Like many half as wise. The thing I mean

Refers to you, not him."

"Refers to me." He echoed,-"Me! You sound it like a stone

Dropped down a dry well very listlessly.

By one who never thinks about the

Alive at the bottom. Presently per-

You'll sound your 'me' more proudly-till I shrink."

" Lord Howe's the toad, then, in this question?"

" Brief We'll take it graver. Give me sofa-room.

And quiet hearing. You know Eglinton,

John Eglinton, of Eglinton in Kent?'

"Is he the toad? he's rather like the snail;

Known chiefly for the house upon his back:

Divide the man and house—you kill the man:

That's Eglinton of Eglinton, Lord Howe."

He answered grave. "A reputable

An excellent landlord of the olden stamp,

If somewhat slack in new philanthropies; Who keeps his birthdays with a

tenants' dance,

Is hard upon them when they miss the church

Or keep their children back from catechism.

But not ungentle when the aged poor Pick sticks at hedge-sides; nay, I've heard him say,

'The old dame has a twinge because she stoops:

That's punishment enough for felony.' "

"O tender-hearted landlord! May I take

My long lease with him, when the time arrives

For gathering winter faggots!"
"He likes art,

Buys books and pictures . . . of a certain kind;

Neglects no patent duty; a good son"...

"To a most obedient mother. Born to wear

His father's shoes, he wears her husband's too:

Indeed, I've heard it's touching. Dear Lord Howe, You shall not praise me so against

your heart, When I'm at worst for praise and

faggots." "Be

Less bitter with me, for . . . in short," he said.

"I have a letter, which he urged me

To bring you . . . I could scarcely choose but yield: Insisting that a new love passing

through

The hand of an old friendship, caught from it

Some reconciling perfume."

" Love, you say? My lord, I cannot love. I only find The rhymes for love,—and that's not love, my lord.

Take back your letter." "Pause: you'll read it first?"

"I will not read it: it is stereotyped: The same he wrote to,—anybody's name,-

Anne Blythe, the actress, when she had died so true,

A duchess fainted in a private box: Pauline, the dancer, after the great pas,

In which her little feet winked overhead

Like other fireflies, and amazed the

Or Baldinacci, when her F in alt Had touched the silver tops of heaven itself

With such a pungent soul-dart, even the Queen

Laid softly, each to each, her white- In this uneven, unfostering England gloved palms,

your friend)

Aurora Leigh,—when some indiffer- But soul-strokes merely tell upon ent rhymes,

Like those the boys sang round the They strike from,—it is hard to stand holy ox

haps, to set

Our Apis-public lowing. Oh, he Be fished up, by Apollo's divine wants,

Instead of any worthy wife at home, A star upon his stage of Eglinton! Advise him that he is not overshrewd

In being so little modest: a dropped

Makes bitter waters, says a Book I've read.

And there's his unread letter." "My dear friend,"

Lord Howe began . . .

In haste I tore the phrase. "You mean your friend of Eglinton, or me?'

"I mean you, you," he answered with some fire.

" A happy life means prudent compromise;

The tare runs through the farmer's garnered sheaves; But though the gleaner's apron

holds pure wheat, We count her poorer. Tare with

wheat, we cry, And good with drawbacks. You,

you love your art, And, certain of vocation, set your

soul On utterance. Only . . . in this

world we have made, (They say God made it first, but,

if He did, 'Twas so long since, . . . and, since,

we have spoiled it so, He scarce would know it, if He looked this way,

flames blown out,)

In this bad, twisted, topsy-turvy world.

Where all the heaviest wrongs get Makes acceptable life,' you say uppermost,-

here,

And sighed for joy: or else (I thank | Where ledger-strokes and swordstrokes count indeed,

the flesh

for art,

On Memphis highway chanced, per- Unless some golden tripod from the

chance,

To throne such feet as yours, my prophetess.

At Delphi. Think,—the god comes down as fierce

twenty bloodhounds! shakes you, strangles you.

Until the oracular shriek shall ooze in froth!

At best it's not all ease,—at worst too hard:

A place to stand on is a 'vantage gained,

And here's your tripod. To be plain, dear friend, You're poor, except in what you

richly give: You labour for your own bread pain-

fully, Or ere you pour our wine. For art's sake, pause."

I answered slow,—as some wayfaring man. Who feels himself at night too far

from home. Makes steadfast face against the bitter wind.

"Is art so less a thing than virtue is, That artists first must cater for their ease

Or ever they make issue past themselves

To generous use? alas, and is it so, That we, who would be somewhat clean, must sweep

Our ways as well as walk them, and ' no friend

From hells we preach of, with the Confirm us nobly,—'Leave results to God,

But you, be clean?' What! 'prudent compromise

instead,

You, you, Lord Howe?—in things indifferent, well.

For instance, compromise the wheaten By good Sir Blaise and clever Mister bread

serge,

And sleep on down, if needs, for I almost snatched. I have a world sleep on straw;

But there, end compromise. I will About your cousin's place in Shropnot bate

One artist-dream, on straw or down, my lord,

Nor pinch my liberal soul, though I be poor,

Nor cease to love high, though I live thus low."

So speaking, with less anger in my

Than sorrow, I rose quickly to depart:

While he, thrown back upon the noble shame

Of such high-stumbling natures, murmured words,

The right words after wrong ones. Ah, the man

Is worthy, but so given to entertain Impossible plans of superhuman life,-He sets his virtues on so raised a shelf.

To keep them at the grand millennial height,

He has to mount a stool to get at them:

And, meantime, lives on quite the common way,

With everybody's morals.

As we passed. Lord Howe insisting that his friendly arm

Should oar me across the sparkling brawling stream

Which swept from room to room,we fell at once

On Lady Waldemar. "Miss Leigh," she said,

And gave me such a smile, so cold and bright,

As if she tried it in a 'tiring glass And liked it; "all to-night I've

strained at you, As babes at baubles held up out of He never loved her, -never. By the reach

By spiteful nurses ("Never snatch," | You have not heard of her . . .? they say,)

And there you sate, most perfectly shut in

Smith, For rye, the meat for lentils, silk for And then our dear Lord Howe! at

last, indeed,

to speak

shire, where I've been to see his work . . . our

work,-you heard I went? . . . and of a letter, yesterday,

In which, if I should read a page or two.

You might feel interest, though you're locked of course

In literary toil.—You'll like to hear Your last book lies at the phalansterv.

As judged innocuous for the elder girls

And younger women who still care for books.

We all must read, you see, before we live:

But slowly the ineffable light comes

And, as it deepens, drowns the written word,— So said your cousin, while we stood

and felt A sunset from his favourite beech-

tree seat: He might have been a poet if he

would, But then he saw the higher thing at

once, And climbed to it. I think he looks

well now. Has quite got over that unfor-

tunate . . Ah, ah . . . I know it moved you. Tender-heart!

You took a liking to the wretched girl. Perhaps you thought the marriage suitable,

Who knows? a poet hankers for romance,

And so on. As for Romney Leigh, 'tis sure

way,

quite out of sight.

And out of saving? lost in every A human creature, must not, shall sense?"

She might have gone on talking half an hour.

I think,

As a garden-statue a child pelts with As if she had fingered me and dog-

I put in "Yes" or "No," I scarce knew whv:

The blind man walks wherever the The knowledge of a thing implies the dog pulls,

And so I answered. Till Lord Howe broke in:

"What penance takes the wretch who interrupts

The talk of charming women? I, at last.

Must brave it. Pardon, Lady Waldemar!

The lady on my arm is tired, unwell, And loyally I've promised she shall

No harder word this evening, than . . . good-night;

The rest her face speaks for her."-Then we went.

And I breathe large at home. I drop my cloak, Unclasp my girdle, loose the band

that ties My hair . . . now could I but un-

loose my soul! We are sepulchred alive in this close

world, And want more room.

The charming woman there— This reckoning up and writing down her talk

Affects me singularly. How she talked

To pain me! woman's spite!-you wear steel-mail:

A woman takes a housewife from her breast,

And plucks the delicatest needle out As 'twere a rose, and pricks you carefully

'Neath nails, 'neath eyelids, in your And really: where we yearn to loose nostrils,-say,

A beast would roar so tortured,—but And melt like white pearls in another's a man.

not flinch.

No. not for shame.

What vexes, after all, Is just that such as she, with such as I, And I stood still, and cold, and pale, Knows how to vex. Sweet heaven, she takes me up

eared me

For pretty pastime. Every now and And spelled me by the fireside, half a life!

> She knows my turns, my feeble points. -What then?

thing;

Of course, she found that in me, she saw that,

Her pencil underscored this for a fault. And I, still ignorant. Shut the book up:--close!

And crush that beetle in the leaves.

O heart. At last we shall grow hard too, like the rest.

And call it self-defence because we are soft.

And after all, now, why should I be pained,

That Romney Leigh, my cousin, should espouse

This Lady Waldemar? And, say, she held

Her newly-blossomed gladness in my face, . . .

'Twas natural surely, if not generous. Considering how, when winter held her fast,

I helped the frost with mine, and pained her more

Than she pains me. Pains me !- but wherefore pained?

'Tis clear my cousin Romney wants a wife,-

So, good !- The man's need of the woman, here,

Is greater than the woman's of the man,

And easier served: for where the man discerns

A sex (ah, ah, the man can generalise, Said he), we see but one, ideally

ourselves

wine,

He seeks to double himself by what he loves,

And make his drink more costly by our pearls.

At board, at bed, at work, and holiday, It is not good for man to be alone,—
And that's his way of thinking, first and last;

And thus my cousin Romney wants a wife.

But then my cousin sets his dignity On personal virtue. If he understands

By love, like others, self-aggrandisement,

It is that he may verily be great By doing rightly and kindly. Once he thought,

For charitable ends set duly forth In Heaven's white judgment-book, to marry . . . ah,

We'll call her name Aurora Leigh, although

She's changed since then !—and once, for social ends,

Poor Marian Erle, my sister Marian Erle,

My woodland sister, sweet maid Marian,

Whose memory moans on in me like the wind

Through ill-shut casements, making me more sad

Than ever I find reasons for. Alas, Poor pretty plaintive face, embodied ghost,

He finds it easy, then, to clap thee off From pulling at his sleeve and book and pen,—

He locks thee out at night into the cold,

Away from butting with thy horny eyes

Against his crystal dreams,—that, now, he's strong To love anew? that Lady Waldemar

Succeeds my Marian?

After all, why not?

After all, why not? He loved not Marian, more than once he loved

Aurora. If he loves, at last, that Third,

Albeit she prove as slippery as spilt oil

On marble floors, I will not augur him

Ill luck for that. Good love, howe'er ill-placed,

Is better for a man's soul in the end, Than if he loved ill what deserves love well.

A pagan, kissing, for a step of Pan, The wild-goat's hoof-print on the loamy down,

Exceeds our modern thinker who turns back

The strata . . . granite, limestone, coal, and clay,

Concluding coldly with, "Here's law! Where's God?"

And then at worse,—if Romney loves her not,—

At worst,—if he's incapable of love, Which may be—then indeed, for such a man

Incapable of love, she's good enough; For she, at worst too, is a woman still And loves him . . . as the sort of woman can.

My loose long hair began to burn and creep,

Alive to the very ends, about my knees:

I swept it backward as the wind sweeps flame, With the passion of my hands. Ah.

Romney laughed
One day . . . (how full the memories

come up!)
'—Your Florence fireflies live on in

your hair," He said, "it gleams so." Well, I

wrung them out, My fireflies; made a knot as hard as

life,
Of those loose, soft, impracticable curls,

And then sat down and thought . . . "She shall not think

Her thought of me,"—and drew my desk and wrote.

"Dear Lady Waldemar, I could not speak

With people round me, nor can sleep to-night

And not speak, after the great news I heard

Of you and of my cousin. May you be Most happy; and the good he meant the world,

Replenish his own life. Say what I And hastening to get nearer to the

mouth.

As you are you . . . I only Aurora And seal, —and now I'm out of all Leigh."

That's quiet, guarded! though she hold it up

Against the light, she'll not see through it more

Than lies there to be seen. So much for pride;

And now for peace, a little! Let me

All writing back . . . "Sweet thanks, my sweetest friend,

"You've made more joyful my great joy itself."

-No, that's too simple! she would twist it thus,

"My joy would still be as sweet as thyme in drawers,

However shut up in the dark and dry; But violets, aired and dewed by love like yours,

Out-smell all thyme! we keep that in our clothes,

But drop the other down our bosoms,

They smell like " . . . ah, I see her writing back

Just so. She'll make a nosegay of her words,

And tie it with blue ribbons at the end To suit a poet; -- pshaw!

Ând then we'll have The call to church: the broken, sad. bad dream

Dreamed out at last; the marriagevow complete

With the marriage-breakfast; praying in white gloves,

Drawn off in haste for drinking pagan toasts

In somewhat stronger wine than any sipped

By gods, since Bacchus had his way with grapes.

A postscript stops all that, and rescues

"You need not write. I have been overworked.

And think of leaving London, England even.

And let my word be sweeter for your Where men sleep better. So, adieu." —I fold

the coil:

I breathe now; I spring upward like a branch.

A ten-years school-boy with a crooked stick

May pull down to his level, in search of nuts,

But cannot hold a moment. How we twang

Back on the blue sky, and assert our height.

While he stares after! Now, the wonder seems

That I could wrong myself by such a doubt.

We poets always have uneasy hearts: Because our hearts, large-rounded as the globe.

Can turn but one side to the sun at

We are used to dip our artist-hands in gall

And potash, trying potentialities Of alternated colour, till at last

We get confused, and wonder for our skin

How nature tinged it first. Wellhere's the true

Good flesh-colour; I recognise my hand.—

Which Romney Leigh may clasp as just a friend's.

And keep his clean.

And now, my Italy. Alas, if we could ride with naked souls And make no noise and pay no price

I would have seen thee sooner, Italy,— For still I have heard thee crying through my life,

Thou piercing silence of ecstatic graves, Men call that name!

But even a witch, to-day, Must melt down golden pieces in the nard

Wherewith to anoint her broomstick ere she rides;

And poets evermore are scant of gold, And, if they find a piece behind the door,

It turns by sunset to a withered leaf.
The Devil himself scarce trusts his
patented

Gold-making art to any who make rhymes.

But culls his Faustus from philosophers

And not from poets. "Leave my Job," said God;

And so, the Devil leaves him without pence,

And poverty proves, plainly, special grace.

In these new, just, administrative times

Men clamour for an order of merit. Why?

Here's black bread on the table, and no wine!

At least I am a poet in being poor; Thank God. I wonder if the manuscript

Of my long poem, if 'twere sold outright,

Would fetch enough to buy me shoes, to go

A-foot, (thrown in, the necessary patch

For the other side the Alps)? it cannot be:

I fear that I must sell this residue Of my father's books; although the Elzevirs

Have fly-leaves over-written by his hand,

In faded notes as thick and fine and brown

As cobwebs on a tawny monument Of the old Greeks—conferenda hæc cum his—

Corrupte citat-lege potius.

And so on, in the scholar's regal way Of giving judgment on the parts of speech,

As if he sate on all twelve thrones uppiled,

Arraigning Israel. Ay, but books and notes

Must go together. And this "Proclus" too,

In quaintly dear contracted Grecian types,

Fantastically crumpled, like his thoughts

Which would not seem too plain; you go round twice

For one step forward, then you take it back,

Because you're somewhat giddy!
there's the rule
For "Proclus" Ab I stained this

For "Proclus." Ah, I stained this middle leaf With pressing in't my Florence iris-

bell,
Long stalk and all: my father chided

Long stalk and all: my father chided

For that stain of blue blood,—I recollect
The peevish turn his voice took.—

"Silly girls,
Who plant their flowers in our philo-

sophy
To make it fine, and only spoil the

No more of it, Aurora." Yes—no more!

Ah, blame of love, that's sweeter than all praise

Of those who love not! 'tis so lost to me,

I cannot, in such beggared life, afford Tolose my "Proclus." Not for Florence, even.

The kissing Judas, "Wolff," shall-go instead,

Who builds us such a royal book as this

To honour a chief-poet, folio-built, And writes above, "The house of Nobody:"

Who floats in cream, as rich as any sucked

From Juno's breasts, the broad Homeric lines, And, while with their spondaic pro-

digious mouths
They lap the lucent margins as babe-

gods,
Proclaims them bastards. Wolff's
an atheist;

And if the "Iliad" fell out, as he says, By mere fortuitous concourse of old songs,

We'll guess as much, too, for the universe.

That "Wolff," those "Platos": sweep the upper shelves

As clean as this, and so I am almost rich,

Which means, not forced to think of being poor

In sight of ends. To-morrow: no delay.

I'll wait in Paris till good Carrington Dispose of such, and, having chaffered for

My book's price with the publisher, direct

All proceeds to me. Just a line to ask His help.

And now I come, my Italy, My own hills! Are you 'ware of me, my hills,

How I burn toward you? do you feel to-night

The urgency and yearning of my soul, As sleeping mothers feel the sucking babe

And smile?-Nay, not so much as when, in heat,

Vain lightnings catch at your inviolate tops,

And tremble while ye are steadfast. Still, ye go

Your own determined, calm, indifferent way

Toward sunrise, shade by shade, and light by light;

Of all the grand progression nought left out;

As if God verily made you for yourselves,

And would not interrupt your life with ours.

SIXTH BOOK

THE English have a scornful insular

Of calling the French light. The levity

Is in the judgment only, which yet stands;

For say a foolish thing but oft enough (And here's the secret of a hundred creeds.-

Men get opinions as boys learn to spell,

By reiteration chiefly) the same thing Shall pass at last for absolutely wise, And not with fools exclusively. And

We say the French are light, as if we

The cat mews, or the milch-cow gives In each orbed bulb-root of a general us milk:

Say rather, cats are milked, and And mark what subtly fine integumilch-cows mew .

For what is lightness but inconsequence,

Vague fluctuation 'twixt effect and cause,

Compelled by neither? Is a bullet light,

That dashes from the gun-mouth, while the eye

Winks, and the heart beats one, to flatten itself

To a wafer on the white speck on a

A hundred paces off? Even so direct, So sternly undivertible of aim,

Is this French people.

All. idealists Too absolute and earnest, with them

The idea of a knife cuts real flesh; And still, devouring the safe interval.

Which Nature placed between the thought and act,

With those too fiery and impatient souls,

They threaten conflagration to the world

And rush with most unscrupulous logic on

Impossible practice. Set your orators To blow upon them with loud windy mouths

Through watchword phrases, jest or sentiment,

Which drive our burly brutal English mobs

Like so much chaff, whichever way they blow,-This light French people will not thus

be driven. They turn indeed; but then they

turn upon

Some central pivot of their thought and choice, And veer out by the force of holding

fast. -That's hard to understand, for

Englishmen Unused to abstract questions, and

untrained To trace the involutions, valve by

valve.

truth, ment

Divides opposed compartments. Freedom's self

Comes concrete to us, to be understood.

Fixed in a feudal form incarnately To suit our ways of thought and reverence,

The special form, with us, being still the thing.

With us, I say, though I'm of Italy By mother's birth and grave, by father's grave

And memory; let it be,—a poet's heart

Can swell to a pair of nationalities, However ill-lodged in a woman's breast.

And so I am strong to love this noble France,

This poet of the nations, who dreams on

And wails on (while the household goes to wreck)

For ever, after some ideal good,— Some equal poise of sex, some unvowed love

Inviolate, some spontaneous brother-hood.

Some wealth, that leaves none poor and finds none tired,

Some freedom of the many, that respects

The wisdom of the few. Heroic dreams!

Sublime, to dream so; natural, to wake:

And sad, to use such lofty scaffoldings,

Erected for the building of a church, To build instead, a brothel . . . or a prison—

May God save France!

However she have sighed Her great soul up into a great man's face.

To flush his temples out so glorious-

That few dare carp at Cæsar for being bald,

What then?—this Cæsar represents, not reigns,

And is no despot, though twice absolute:

This Head has all the people for a heart;

This purple's lined with the democracy,—

Now let him see to it! for a rent within

Must leave irreparable rags without.

A serious riddle: find such anywhere Except in France; and when it's found in France,

Be sure to read it rightly. So, I mused

Up and down, up and down, the terraced streets,

The glittering boulevards, the white colonnades

Of fair fantastic Paris, who warra

Of fair fantastic Paris who wears boughs

Like plumes as if man made them —

Like plumes, as if man made them,—
tossing up

Her fountains in the sunshine from the squares,

As dice i' the game of beauty, sure to win;

Or as she blew the down-balls of her to dreams,

And only waited for their falling back, To breathe up more, and count her festive hours.

The city swims in verdure, beautiful As Venice on the waters, the seaswan.

What bosky gardens, dropped in close-walled courts,

As plums in ladies' laps, who start and laugh:

What miles of streets that run on after trees,

Still carrying the necessary shops, Those open caskets, with the jewels seen!

And trade is art, and art's philosophy, In Paris. There's a silk, for instance, there.

As worth an artist's study for the folds,

As that bronze opposite! nay, the bronze has faults;

Art's here too artful,—conscious as a maid,

Who leans to mark her shadow on the wall

Until she lose a 'vantage in her step.
Yet Art walks forward, and knows
where to walk:

The artists also, are idealists, Too absolute for nature, logical To austerity in the application of The special theory: not a soul con-

To paint a crooked pollard and an ass, As the English will, because they find

And like it somehow .-- Ah, the old Tuileries

Is pulling its high cap down on its

Confounded, conscience-stricken, and amazed

By the apparition of a new fair face In those devouring mirrors. Through the grate,

Within the gardens, what a heap of babes.

Swept up like leaves beneath the chestnut-trees,

From every street and alley of the

By the ghosts perhaps, that blow too bleak this way

A-looking for their heads. Dear pretty babes;

I'll wish them luck to have their ballplay out Before the next change comes.—And,

farther on. What statues, poised upon their

columns fine,

As if to stand a moment were a feat, Against that blue! What squares! what breathing-room

For a nation that runs fast,—av, runs against

The dentist's teeth at the corner, in pale rows.

Which grin at progress in an epigram.

I walked the day out, listening to the Of the first Napoleon's dry bones,

in his second grave By victories guarded 'neath the golden

dome

That caps all Paris like a bubble. "Shall

These dry bones live?" thought Louis Philippe once,

And lived to know. Herein is argument For kings and politicians, but still

more For poets, who bear buckets to the Unsmooth, ignoble, save to me and well,

Of ampler draught.

These crowds are very good For meditation (when we are very strong).

Though love of beauty makes us timorous,

And draws us backward from the coarse town-sights

To count the daisies upon dappled fields,

And hear the streams bleat on among the hills

In innocent and indolent repose;

While still with silken elegiac thoughts We wind out from us the distracting world,

And die into the chrysalis of a man, And leave the best that may, to come of us.

In some brown moth. Be, rather, bold, and bear

To look into the swarthiest face of things.

For God's sake Who has made them.

Seven days' work:

The last day shutting 'twixt its dawn and eve.

The whole work bettered, of the previous six!

Since God collected and resumed in

The firmaments, the strata, and the lights.

Fish, fowl, and beast, and insect,—all their trains

Of various life caught back upon His arm,

Reorganised, and constituted MAN. The microcosm, the adding up of works:

Within whose fluttering nostrils, then, at last,

Consummating Himself, the Maker sighed.

As some strong winner at the footrace sighs

Touching the goal.

Humanity is great; And, if I would not rather pore upon An ounce of common, ugly, human

dust, An artisan's palm, or a peasant's brow,

God.

Than track old Nilus to his silver roots,

And wait on all the changes of the moon

Among the mountain-peaks of Thessaly

(Until her magic crystal round itself For many a witch to see in)—set it down

As weakness,—strength by no means.

How is this,

That men of science, osteologists

And surgeons, beat some poets, in respect

For nature,—count nought common or unclean,

Spend raptures upon perfect specimens

Of indurated veins, distorted joints, Or beautiful new cases of curved spine;

While we, we are shocked at nature's falling off,

We dare to shrink back from her warts and blains,

We will not, when she sneezes, look at her,

Not even to say "God bless her"?
That's our wrong;

For that, she will not trust us often with

Her larger sense of beauty and desire,

But tethers us to a lily or a rose And bids us diet on the dew inside,— Left ignorant that the hungry beggar-

boy (Who stares unseen against our absent eyes,

And wonders at the gods that we must be,

To pass so careless for the oranges!) Bears yet a breastful of a fellowworld

To this world, undisparaged, undespoiled,

And (while we scorn him for a flower or two,

As being, Heaven help us, less poetical)

Contains, himself, both flowers and firmaments

And surging seas and aspectable stars, And all that we would push him out of sight

In order to see nearer. Let us pray

God's grace to keep God's image in repute;

That so, the poet and philanthropist (Even I and Romney), may stand side by side,

Because we both stand face to face with men

Contemplating the people in the rough,—

Yet each so follow a vocation,—his And mine.

I walked on, musing with myself On life and art, and whether, after all, A larger metaphysics might not help Our physics, a completer poetry

Adjust our daily life and vulgar wants, More fully than the special outside plans,

Phalansteries, material institutes, The civil conscriptions and lay monas-

teries
Preferred by modern thinkers, as they

thought
The bread of man indeed made all his
life.

And washing seven times in the 2" People's Baths"

Were sovereign for a people's leprosy,—

Still leaving out the essential prophet's word

That comes in power. On which, we thunder down,

We prophets, poets,—Virtue's in the word!

The maker burnt the darkness up with His,

To inaugurate the use of vocal life; And, plant a poet's word even, deep enough

In any man's breast, looking presently For offshoots, you have done more for the man,

Than if you dressed him in a broadcloth coat

And warmed his Sunday pottage at your fire.

Yet Romney leaves me . . .

God! what face is that?
O Romney, O Marian!

Walking on the quays
And pulling thoughts to pieces
leisurely,

As if I caught at grasses in a field, And bit them slow between my absent lips, And shred them with my hands . . . What face is that?

What a face, what a look, what a likeness! Full on mine

The sudden blow of it came down, till all

My blood swam, my eyes dazzled. Then I sprang—

It was as if a meditative man
Were dreaming out a summer after-

And watching gnats a-prick upon a pond,

When something floats up suddenly, out there,

Turns over . . . a dead face, known once alive—

So old, so new! It would be dreadful now

To lose the sight and keep the doubt of this.

He plunges—ha! he has lost it in the splash.

I plunged—I tore the crowd up, either side,

And rushed on,—forward, forward . . . after her.

Her? whom?

A woman sauntered slow, in front, Munching an apple,—she left off amazed

As if I had snatched it: that's not she, at least.

A man walked arm-linked with a lady veiled,

Both heads dropped closer than the need of talk:

They started; he forgot her with his face,

And she herself—and clung to him

And she, herself,—and clung to him as if
My look were fatal. Such a stream

of folk, And all with cares and business of

their own!
I ran the whole quay down against their eyes;

No Marian; nowhere Marian. Almost, now,

I could call "Marian, Marian," with the shriek

Of desperate creatures calling for the Dead.

Where is she, was she? was she anywhere?

I stood still, breathless, gazing, straining out

In every uncertain distance, till, at last,

A gentleman abstracted as myself Came full against me, then resolved the clash

In voluble excuses, -- obviously

Some learned member of the Institute Upon his way there, walking, for his health,

While meditating on the last "Discourse";

Pinching the empty air 'twixt finger and thumb,

From which the snuff being ousted by that shock,

Defiled his snow-white waistcoat, duly pricked

At the button-hole with honourable red;

"Madame, your pardon,"—there, he swerved from me

A metre, as confounded as he had heard

That Dumas would be chosen to fill up

The next chair vacant, by his "men in us."

Since when was genius found respectable?

It passes in its place, indeed,—which means

The seventh floor back, or else the hospital:

Revolving pistols are ingenious things, But prudent men (Academicians are) Scarce keep them in the cupboard, next the prunes.

And so, abandoned to a bitter mirth, I loitered to my inn. O world, O world,

O jurists, rhymers, dreamers, what you please,

We play a weary game of hide-andseek!

We shape a figure of our fantasy,

Call nothing something, and run after it

And lose it, lose ourselves too in the search;

Till, clash against us, comes a somebody

Who also has lost something and is lost,

Philosopher against philanthropist, Academician against poet, man Against woman, against the living

the dead .-

Then home, with a bad headache and worse jest!

To change the water for my helio-

And vellow roses. Paris has such flowers.

But England, also. 'Twas a yellow

By that south window of the little house.

My cousin Romney gathered with his

last;

And then I shook the tree too rough, too rough,

For roses to stay after.

Now, my maps. I must not linger here from Italy Till the last nightingale is tired of song,

And the last firefly dies off in the maize.

My soul's in haste to leap into the sun And scorch and see the itself to a finer mood.

Which here, in this chill north, is apt to stand

Too stiffly in former moulds.

That face persists. It floats up, it turns over in my mind, As like to Marian, as one dead is like The same alive. In very deed a face And not a fancy, though it vanished so:

The small fair face between the darks of hair.

I used to liken, when I saw her first. To a point of moonlit water down a well:

The low brow, the frank space between the eves.

Which always had the brown pathetic look

Of a dumb creature who had been beaten once,

And never since was easy with the world.

Ah, ah—now I remember perfectly Those eyes, to-day,-how overlarge they seemed,

As if some patient passionate despair (Like a coal dropt and forgot on tapestry,

Which slowly burns a widening circle out)

Had burnt them larger, larger. And those eyes

To-day, I do remember, saw me too As I saw them, with conscious lids astrain

In recognition. Now, a fantasy, A simple shade or image of the brain. Is merely passive, does not retroact. Is seen, but sees not.

Twas a real face.

Perhaps a real Marian.

Which being so, On all my birthdays for me, save the I ought to write to Romney, "Marian's here.

Be comforted for Marian."

My pen fell. My hands struck sharp together, as hands do

Which hold at nothing. Can I write to him

A half truth? can I keep my own soul blind To the other half, . . . the worse?

What are our souls,

If still, to run on straight a sober pace Nor start at every pebble or dead leaf, They must wear blinkers, ignore facts, suppress

Six-tenths of the road? Confront the truth, my soul!

And oh, as truly as that was Marian's face,

The arms of that same Marian clasped a thing

. . Not hid so well beneath the scanty shawl.

I cannot name it now for what it was.

A child. Small business has a castaway

Like Marian, with that crown of prosperous wives, At which the gentlest she grows arro-

gant And says "my child." Who'll find

an emerald ring

On a beggar's middle finger, and require

More testimony to convict a thief? A child's too costly for so mere a wretch;

She filched it somewhere; and it And who, moreover, having seen her means, with her,

Instead of honour, blessing, . . . merely shame.

I cannot write to Romney, "Here she is.

Here's Marian found! I'll set you on her track:

I saw her here, in Paris, . . . and her child.

She put away your love two years ago,

But, plainly, not to starve. You suffered then:

And, now that you've forgot her utterly

As any last year's annual, in whose place

You've planted a thick flowering evergreen,

I choose, being kind, to write and tell you this

To make you wholly easy-she's not dead,

But only . . . damned."

Stop there: I go too fast; I'm cruel like the rest,—in haste to

The first stir in the arras for a rat, And set my barking, biting thoughts upon't.

—A child! what then? Suppose a neighbour's sick And asked her, "Marian, carry out

my child In this spring air,"-I punish her for

that? Or say, the child should hold her

round the neck For good child-reasons, that he liked

it so And would not leave her-she had

winning ways-I brand her therefore, that she took the child?

Not so.

I will not write to Romney Leigh. For now he's happy,—and she may indeed

Be guilty,—and the knowledge of her fault

Would draggle his smooth time. But I, whose days

Are not so fine they cannot bear the rain,

face,

Must see it again, . . . will see it, by my hopes Of one day seeing heaven too. The

police

Shall track her, hound her, ferret their own soil:

We'll dig this Paris to its catacombs But certainly we'll find her, have her

And save her, if she will or will notchild

Or no child,—if a child, then one to save!

The long weeks passed on without consequence.

As easy find a footstep on the sand The morning after spring-tide, as the

Of Marian's feet between the incessant surfs

Of this live flood. She may have moved this way,-

But so the starfish does, and crosses out

The dent of her small shoe. The foiled police

Renounced me; " Could they find a girl and child.

No other signalment but girl and child? No data shown, but noticeable eyes

And hair in masses, low upon the brow,

As if it were a iron crown and pressed? Friends heighten, and suppose they

specify: Why, girls with hair and eyes, are everywhere

In Paris; they had turned me up in vain

No Marian Erle indeed, but certainly Mathildes, Justines, Victoires, . . . or, if I sought

The English, Betsis, Saras, by the score.

They might as well go out into the fields

To find a speckled bean, that's somehow specked,

And somewhere in the pod."-They left me so.

Philosopher against philanthr dreamed Academician against poet, m Against woman, against the

the dead.

Then home, with a bad headal her! I worse jest!

her, al-

To change the water for my tropes did wicked

And yellow roses. Paris he flowers.

But England, also. 'Twas aresently; rose, had just

By that south window of the house, place of

My cousin Romney gathered w

hand ers to be On all my birthdays for me, sa

last; ow . . .
And then I shook the tree too : chance too rough, st night,

For roses to stay after.

Now, my harder I must not linger here from It:

Till the last nightingale is tithen the song,

And the last firefly dies off i starry maize.

My soul's in haste to leap into tet-place And scorch and seethe itself to

mood, is), and Which here, in this chill north

to stand es in the

Too stiffly in former moulds.

That face pith the
It floats up, it turns over in my

As like to Marian, as one deadhe thing The same alive. In very deed

And not a fancy, though it vig, while

The small fair face between the braided of hair,

I used to liken, when I saw here blos-To a point of moonlit water d, a well:

The low brow, the frank space be tween the eyes,

Which always had the brown pathetic look

Of a dumb creature who had been beaten once,

And never since was easy with the world.

Ah, ah—now I remember perfectly
Those eyes, to-day,—how overlarge
they seemed,

That branch of flowering mountaingorse?"—" So much?

Too much for me, then!" turning the face round

So close upon me, that I felt the sigh It turned with.

"Marian, Marian!"—face to face—

"Marian! I find you. Shall I let you go?"

I held her two slight wrists with both my hands;

"Ah Marian, Marian, can I let you go?"
-She fluttered from me like a cycla-

men,
As white, which, taken in a sudden

wind,
Beats on against the palisade.—" Let

pass,"
She said at last. "I will not," I

She said at last. "I will not," I replied;
"I lost my sister Marian many days

"I lost my sister Marian many days, And sought her ever in my walks and prayers,

And, now I find her . . . do we throw away

The bread we worked and prayed for,—crumble it

And drop it . . . to do even so by thee

Whom still I've hungered after more than bread,

My sister Marian?—can I hurt thee, dear?
Then why distrust me? Never

Then why distrust me? Never tremble so.

Come with me rather, where we'll talk and live,

And none shall vex us. I've a home for you

And me and no one else"...

She shook her head.
"A home for you and me and no one

"A home for you and me and no one else
Ill-suits one of us: I prefer to such,

A roof of grass on which a flower might spring,
Less costly to me than the changest

Less costly to me than the cheapest A here;

And yet I could not, at this hour, O1 afford

. like home, even. That you offer Mo yours,

A chank you. You are good as heaven itself—

As good as one I knew before . . . Farewell."

I loosed her hands.—" In his name. no farewell!"

(She stood as if I held her.) "For his sake, For his sake, Romney's! by the good

he meant. Ay, always! by the love he pressed

for once,-

And by the grief, reproach, abandonment,

He took in change"... "He, Romney! who grieved him?

Who had the heart for't? what reproach touch'd him?

Be merciful,—speak quickly." "Therefore come,"

I answered with authority,-"I think We dare to speak such things, and

name such names, In the open squares of Paris!"

Not a word She said, but, in a gentle humbled

(As one who had forgot herself in

grief), Turned round and followed closely

where I went,

As if I led her by a narrow plank Across devouring waters, step by step,-

And so in silence we walked on a mile.

And then she stopped: her face was

white as wax. "We go much farther?"

"You are ill," I asked,

"Or tired?" She looked the whiter for

her smile. "There's one at home," she said,

" has need of me

By this time,—and I must not let him wait."

"Not even," I asked, "to hear of Romney Leigh?"

"Not even," she said, "to hear of Mister Leigh."

"In that case," I resumed, "I go with you.

spend."

Her lips moved in a spasm without a sound,

But then she spoke. "It shall be as you please;

And better so-'tis shorter seen than told.

And though you will not find me worth your pains,

That even, may be worth some pains to know,

For one as good as you are."

Then she led The way, and I, as by a narrow plank Across devouring waters, followed her.

Stepping by her footsteps, breathing by her breath,

And holding her with eyes that would not slip;

And so, without a word, we walked a mile,

And so, another mile, without a word.

Until the peopled streets being all dismissed,

House-rows and roups all scattered like a flock,

The market-gardens thickened, and the long

White walls beyond, like spiders' outside threads,

Stretched, feeling blindly toward the country-fields

Through half-built habitations and half-dug

Foundations,—intervals of trenchant chalk,

That bite betwixt the grassy uneven turfs

Where goats (vine-tendrils trailing from their mouths) Stood perched on edges of the cellar-

Which should be, staring as about to

leap To find their coming Bacchus. All

the place Seemed less a cultivation than a

waste: Men work here, only,-scarce begin

to live: And we can talk the same thing there | All's sad, the country struggling with

the town, None waits for me: I have my day to Like an untamed hawk upon a strong man's fist.

That beats its wings and tries to get away,

And cannot choose be satisfied so soon To hop through court-yards with its right foot tied.

The vintage plains and pastoral hills in sight!

We stopped beside a house too high and slim

To stand there by itself, but waiting

Five others, two on this side, three on Should grow up from the sullen second

floor

They pause at now, to build it to a

The upper windows partly were unglazed

Meantime,—a meagre, unripe house: a line

Of rigid poplars elbowed it behind,

And, just in front, beyond the lime and bricks

That wronged the grass between it and the road,

A great acacia, with its slender trunk And overpoise of multitudinous leaves (In which a hundred fields might spill their dew

And intense verdure, yet find room enough).

Stood, reconciling all the place with green.

I followed up the stair upon her step. She hurried upward, shot across a face.

A woman's on the landing,-" How now, now!

Is no one to have holidays but you? You said an hour, and stay three hours, I think,

And Julie waiting for your betters

here? Why if he had waked, he might have

waked, for me." - Just murmuring an excusing word she passed

And shut the rest out with the chamber-door,

Myself shut in beside her.

Scarce larger than a grave, and near Had kept the mould of t. as bare;

Two stools, a pallet-bed; I saw the room:

A mouse could find no sort of shelter

Much less a greater secret; curtainless,-

The window fixed you with its torturing eye,

Defying you to take a step apart. If peradventure you would hide a thing.

I saw the whole room, I and Marian there

Alone.

Alone? She threw her bonnet off. Then sighing as 'twere sighing the last time.

Approached the bed, and drew a shawl away:

You could not peel a fruit you fear to bruise

More calmly and more carefully than so,--Nor would you find within, a rosier

flushed

Pomegranate.

There he lay, upon his back. The yearling creature, warm and moist with life

To the bottom of his dimples,—to the Of the lovely tumbled curls about his

For since he had been covered over-

To keep him from the light-glare,

both his cheeks Were hot and scarlet as the first live

The shepherd's heart-blood ebbed

away into, The faster for his love. And love was

As instant! in the pretty baby-

mouth, Shut close as if for dreaming that it sucked:

The little naked feet drawn up the

way Of nestled birdlings; everything so

And tender,—to the little holdfast hands.

'Twas a room Which, closing on a finger into sleep,

While we stood there dumb,—

For oh, that it should take such inno-To prove just guilt, I thought, and

stood there dumb:

The light upon his eyelids pricked them wide.

And, staring out at us with all their

As half perplexed between the angel-

He had been away to visit in his sleep, And our most mortal presence,-gradually

He saw his mother's face, accepting it In change for heaven itself, with such

a smile

As might have well been learnt there.

-never moved,

But smiled on, in a drowse of ecstasy. So happy (half with her and half with heaven)

He could not have the trouble to be stirred.

But smiled and lay there. Like a rose, I said:

As red and still indeed as any rose, That blows in all the silence of its leaves.

Content, in blowing, to fulfil its life.

She leaned above him (drinking him as wine)

In that extremity of love, 'twill pass For agony or rapture, seeing that love

Includes the whole of nature, round-

To love . . . no more, - since more can never be

Than just love. Self-forgot, cast out of self.

And drowning in the transport of the sight.

Her whole pale passionate face, mouth, forehead, eyes,

One gaze, she stood! then, slowly as he smiled,

She smiled too, slowly, smiling una-

And drawing from his countenance to hers

A fainter red, as if she watched a flame

And stood in it a-glow. " How beautiful,"

Said she.

I answered, trying to be cold. (Must sin have compensations, was my thought,

As if it were a holy thing like grief? And is a woman to be fooled aside From putting vice down, with that woman's toy,

—" Ay! the child is well A baby?)enough,"

I answered. "If his mother's palms are clean.

They need be glad, of course, in clasping such:

But if not,—I would rather lay my hand.

Were I she,—on God's brazen altarbars

Red-hot with burning sacrificial lambs.

Than touch the sacred curls of such a child."

She plunged her fingers in his clustering locks.

As one who would not be afraid of fire:

And then, with indrawn steady utterance, said,—

"My lamb, my lamb! although, through such as thou,

The most unclean got courage and approach To God, once,-now they cannot,

even with men, Find grace enough for pity and gentle

words." "My Marian," I made answer, grave

and sad. "The priest who stole a lamb to offer him,

Was still a thief. And if a woman steals

(Through God's own barrier-hedges of true love,

Which fence out licence in securing love)

A child like this, that smiles so in her

She is no mother, but a kidnapper, And he's a dismal orphan . . . not a

son; Whom all her kisses cannot feed so

full He will not miss hereafter a pure home

To live in, a pure heart to lean against, A pure good mother's name and memory

To hope by, when the world grows thick and bad.

And he feels out for virtue."

"Oh," she smiled With bitter patience, "the child takes his chance,--

Not much worse off in being fatherless

Than I was, fathered. He will say, belike,

His mother was the saddest creature born:

He'll say his mother lived so contrary To joy, that even the kindest, seeing her

Grew sometimes almost cruel: he'll not say

She flew contrarious in the face of God With bat-wings of her vices. Stole my child,—-

My flower of earth, my only flower on earth.

My sweet, my beauty!"... Up she snatched the child,

And, breaking on him in a storm of tears,

Drew out her long sobs from their shivering roots,

Until he took it for a game, and stretched

His feet, and flapped his eager arms like wings,

And crowed and gurgled through his infant laugh:

"Mine, mine," she said; "I have as sure a right

As any glad proud mother in the world,

Who sets her darling down to cut his teeth
Upon her church-ring. If she talks

of law,
I talk of law! I claim my mother-

dues
By law,—the law which now is para-

mount;
The common law, by which the poor and weak

Are trodden underfoot by vicious men,

And loathed for ever after by the good.

Let pass! I did not filch . . . I found the child."

' You found him, Marian?"

"Ay, I found him where I found my curse,—in the gutter, with my shame!

What have you, any of you, to say to that,

Who all are happy, and sit safe and high,

And never spoke before to arraign my right

To grief itself? What, what . . . being beaten down

By hoofs of maddened oxen into a ditch,

Half-dead, whole mangled . . . when a girl, at last,

Breathes, sees . . . and finds there, bedded in her flesh,

Because of the overcoming shock perhaps,

Some coin of price! . . . and when a good man comes

(That's Cod. I the best men are not

(That's God! the best men are not quite as good)

And says, 'I dropped the coin there; take it, you,

And keep it,—it shall pay you for the loss,—

You all put up your finger—' See the thief! Observe that precious thing she has

come to filch! How bad those girls are!' Oh, my

flower, my pet,
I dare forget I have you in my arms,

And fly off to be angry with the world, And fright you, hurt you with my tempers, till

You double up your lip? Ah, that indeed

Is bad: a naughty mother!"
"You mistake,"
I interrupted; "if I loved you not,
I should not, Marian, certainly be

I should not, Marian, certainly be here."
"Alas," she said, "you are so very

good; And yet I wish, indeed, you had never

come
To make me sob until I vex the child.
It is not wholesome for these pleasureplats

To be so early watered by our brine. And then, who knows? he may not

like me now

As well, perhaps, as ere he saw me To do their business and lead spirits fret,-

sa.me

As angels, but he cannot see as Not bettered, quickened toward the

And so I've kept for ever in his sight A sort of smile to please him, -as you place

A green thing from the garden in a

To make believe it grows there. Look, my sweet.

My cowslip-ball! we've done with that cross face,

And here's the face come back you used to like.

Ah, ah! he laughs! he likes me. Ah. Miss Leigh,

You're great and pure; but were you purer still,-

As if you had walked, we'll say, no otherwhere

Than up and down the new Jerusa-

And held your trailing lutestring up yourself

From brushing the twelve stones, for fear of some

Small speck as little as a needleprick,

White stitched on white,—the child would keep to me,

Would choose his poor lost Marian, like me best,

And, though you stretched your arms, cry back and cling,

As we do, when God says it's time to

And bids us go up higher. Leave us, then;

We two are happy. Does he push me

He's satisfied with me, as I with him."

"So soft to one, so hard to others! Nav.

I cried, more angry that she melted

"We make henceforth a cushion of our faults

To sit and practise easy virtues on? I thought a child was given to sanctify A woman,—set her in the sight of all The clear-eyed Heavens, a chosen Looks backward to her early maidenminister

One's ugly fretting! he has eyes the The difficult blue heights. A woman lives.

truth and good

Through being a mother? . . . then she's none! although

She damps her baby's cheeks by kissing them,

As we kill roses."

"Kill! O Christ," she said, And turned her wild sad face from side to side

With most despairing wonder in it-" What,

What have you in your souls against me then.

All of you? am I wicked, do you think?

God knows me, trusts me with the child! but you,

You think me really wicked?"
"Complaisant,"

I answered softly, "to a wrong you've done,

Because of certain profits,—which is wrong

Beyond the first wrong, Marian. When you left

The pure place and the noble heart, to take

The hand of a seducer" . . .

"Whom? whose hand? I took the hand of "...

Springing up erect, And lifting up the child at full arm's length.

As if to bear him like an oriflamme Unconquerable to armies of reproach,-

"By him," she said, "my child's head and its curls,

By those blue eyes no woman born could dare

A perjury on, I make my mother's oath.

That if I left that Heart, to lighten it, The blood of mine was still, except for grief!

No cleaner maid than I was, took a step

To a sadder end,-no matronmother now

hood

Through chaster pulses, I speak steadily:

And paltered with in soul by devil's And smile a little, Marian,—for the liist.

part. .

Would God sit quiet, let us think, in heaven.

Nor strike me dumb with thunder?

Yet I speak: He clears me therefore. What, 'seduced ' 's your word ?

Do wolves seduce a wandering fawn But spoke on calm between its marble in France?

Do eagles, who have pinched a lamb with claws.

Seduce it into carrion? So with

I was not ever, as you say, seduced, But simply, murdered."

There she paused, and sighed, With such a sigh as drops from agony To exhaustion,—sighing while she let the babe

Slide down upon her bosom from her

And all her face's light fell after him, Like a torch quenched in falling. Down she sank.

And sate upon the bedside with the child.

But I, convicted, broken utterly, With woman's passion clung about her waist,

And kissed her hair and eyes,-" I have been wrong,

Sweet Marian" . . . (weeping in a tender rage)

"Sweet holy Marian! And now, Marian, now,

I'll use your oath although my lips are hard

And by the child, my Marian, by the child,

I'll swear his mother shall be innocent Book

Of Him who reads for judgment. Innocent.

dark.

sky;

So surely is your whiteness to be found

And if I lie so . . . if being fouled in Through all dark facts. But pardon. pardon me.

child.

I dared to bid this angel take my If not for me. my sister."

The poor lir Just motioned for the smile and let it

And then, with scarce a stirring of the mouth. As if a statue spoke that could not

breathe.

lins.-"I'm glad. I'm very glad you clear

I should be sorry that you set me

With harlots, or with even a better

name Which misbecomes his mother. For

the rest. I am not on a level with your love.

Nor ever was, you know,-but now am worse. Because that world of yours has

dealt with me As when the hard sea bites and chews

a stone And changes the first form of it. I've

marked A shore of pebbles bitten to one shape From all the various life of mad-

repores : And so, that little stone, called Marian Erle.

Picked up and dropped by you and another friend,

Was ground and tortured by the incessant sea

And bruised from what she was,changed! death's a change,

And she, I said, was murdered: Marian's dead.

What can you do with people when they are dead,

Before my conscience, as in the open But, if you are pious, sing a hymn and go,

Or, if you are tender, heave a sigh and go,

My sister! let the night be ne'er so But go by all means,—and permit the grass

The moon is surely somewhere in the To keep its green feud up 'twixt them and you?

Then leave me,—let me rest. I'm A starved cat, if he had fed it once dead. I sav.

well.

The mother in me has survived the rest.

Why, that's God's miracle you must not tax,-

I'm not less dead for that: I'm nothing more

But just a mother. Only for the But still with such a face, so much child.

I'm warm, and cold, and hungry, and afraid.

And smell the flowers a little, and see the sun.

And speak still, and am silent,-just

for him! I pray you therefore to mistake me

And treat me, haply, as I were alive:

For though you ran a pin into my

I think it would not hurt nor trouble

Here's proof, dear lady,-in the market-place

But now, you promised me to say a word

About . . . a friend, who once, long vears ago.

Took God's place toward me, when He draws and loves

And does not thunder, . . . whom at last I left.

As all of us leave God. You thought perhaps,

I seemed to care for hearing of that friend?

Now, judge me! we have sate here half an hour

And talked together of the child and

And I not asked as much as, 'What's the thing

You had to tell me of the friend . . . the friend?'

He's sad, I think you said, -he's sick, perhaps?

It's nought to Marian if he's sad or Another would have crawled beside

your foot And prayed your words out. Why, a beast, a dog,

with milk.

And if, to save the child from death as Would show less hardness. But I'm dead, you see,

And that explains it."

Poor, poor thing, she spoke And shook her head, as white and calm as frost

On days too cold for raining any more.

alive,

I could not choose but take it on my

And stroke the placid patience of its cheeks,—

Then told my story out, of Romney Leigh.

How, having lost her, sought her, missed her still.

He, broken-hearted for himself and her. Had drawn the curtains of the world

awhile As if he had done with morning.

There I stopped, For when she gasped, and pressed me

with her eyes.

"And now . . . how is it with him? tell me now."-

I felt the shame of compensated grief, And chose my words with scrupleslowly stepped

Upon the slippery stones set here and there

Across the sliding water. "Certainly,

As evening empties morning into night, Another morning takes the evening up

With healthful, providential interchange:

And, though he thought still-of her," "Yes, she knew,

She understood: she had supposed, indeed.

That, as one stops a hole upon a flute. At which a new note comes and shapes the tune,

Excluding her would bring a worthier

And, long ere this, that Lady Waldemar

He loved so "

"Loved," I started,—"loved her so!

Now tell me"

"I will tell you," she replied: "But since we're taking oaths, you'll For just his uses, not her own at promise first

That he, in England, he, shall never

meant to tie

The honourable ribbon of his name, Fell unaware, and came to butchery: Because - I know him, - as he takes to heart

The grief of every stranger, he's not like

To banish mine as far as I should choose

In wishing him most happy. Now he leaves

To think of me, perverse, who went my way,

Unkind, and left him,—but if once he knew . .

Ah, then, the sharp nail of my cruel wrong

Would fasten me for ever in his sight, Like some poor curious bird, through each spread wing

Nailed high up over a fierce hunter's fire.

To spoil the dinner of all tenderer folk Come in by chance. Nay, since your Marian's dead,

You shall not hang her up, but dig a hole

And bury her in silence! ring no bells.

I answered gaily, though my whole voice wept;

"We'll ring the joy-bells, not the funeral-bells,

Because we have her back, dead or alive."

She never answered that, but shook her head;

Then low and calm, as one who, safe in heaven,

Shall tell a story of his lower life,

T/nmoved by shame or anger,—so she spoke.

She told me she had loved upon her

As others pray, more perfectly absorbed

In the act and aspiration. She felt

all.

His stool, to sit on, or put up his foot, His cup, to fill with wine or vinegar, In what a dreadful trap his creature | Whichever drink might please him at the chance,

Round whose unworthy neck he had For that should please her always: let him write

His name upon her . . . it seemed natural:

It was most precious, standing on his shelf,

To wait until he chose to lift his hand. Well, well,—I saw her then, and must have seen

How bright her life went, floating on her love,

Like wicks the housewives send affoat on oil.

Which feeds them to a flame that lasts the night.

To do good seemed so much his business.

That, having done it, she was fain to think.

Must fill up his capacity for joy. At first she never mooted with

herself If he was happy, since he made her so,

Or if he loved her, being so much beloved:

Who thinks of asking if the sun is light.

Observing that it lightens? who's so bold.

To question God of His felicity? Still less. And thus she took for granted first,

What first of all she should have put to proof,

And sinned against him so, but only

"What could you hope," she said. " of such as she?

You take a kid you like, and turn in out

In some fair garden; though the creature's fond

And gentle, it will leap upon the beds And break your tulips, bite your tender trees:

The wonder would be if such innocence

for kids."

chosen her,

Brought in his courteous and benignant friends

To spend their goodness on her, which she took

So very gladly, as a part of his .-By slow degrees, it broke on her slow sense.

That she, too, in that Eden of de-

Was out of place, and, like the silly

Still did most mischief where she meant most love.

A thought enough to make a woman

(No beast in this, but she may well go mad)

That, saying "I am thine to love and use." May blow the plague in her protesting

breath To the very man for whom she claims

to die.-That, clinging round his neck, she

pulls him down And drowns him, -and that, lavish-

ing her soul, She hales perdition on him. "So, being mad,"

Said Marian

" Ah-who stirred such thoughts, you ask?

Whose fault it was, that she should have such thoughts?

None's fault, none's fault. The light comes, and we see:

But if it were not truly for our eyes, There would be nothing seen, for all the light;

And so with Marian. If she saw at last,

The sense was in her,-Lady Walde-

Had spoken all in vain else."

"O my heart, O prophet in my heart," I cried aloud, "Then Lady Waldemar spoke!"

"Did she speak," Mused Marian softly-" or did she only sign?

Or did she put a word into her face

Spoiled less. A garden is no place And look, and so impress you with the word?

Or leave it in the foldings of her gown, And, by degrees, when he who had Like rosemary smells, a movement will shake out

> When no one's conscious? who shall say, or guess?

> Onething alone was certain, - from the

The gracious lady paid a visit first,

She, Marian, saw things different,felt distrust

Of all that sheltering roof of circumstance

Her hopes were building into with clay nests:

Her heart was restless, pacing up and down

And fluttering, like dumb creatures before storms.

Not knowing wherefore she was ill at

"And still the lady came," said Marian Erle,

"Much oftener than he knew it, Mister Leigh.

She bade me never tell him that she had come.

She liked to love me better than he knew. So very kind was Lady Waldemar:

And every time she brought with her more light.

And every light made sorrow clearer . . . Well,

Ah, well! we cannot give her blame for that: 'Twould be the same thing if an angel

Whose right should prove our wrong. And every time The lady came, she looked more

beautiful, And spoke more like a flute among

green trees, Until at last, as one, whose heart

being sad On hearing lovely music, suddenly Dissolves in weeping, I brake out in

Before her . . . asked her counsel ... 'had I erred

In being too happy? would she set me straight?

For she, being wise and good and born above

The flats I had never climbed from, could perceive

If such as I, might grow upon the hills:

And whether such poor herb sufficed to grow,

For Romney Leigh to break his fast upon't.-

Or would he pine on such, or haply starve?

She wrapt me in her generous arms at once.

And let me dream a moment how it

To have a real mother, like some girls:

But when I looked, her face was vounger . . . ay,

Youth's too bright not to be a little

And beauty keeps itself still uppermost,

That's true!-Though Lady Waldemar was kind,

She hurt me, hurt, as if the morning

Should smite us on the eyelids when we sleep,

And wake us up with headache. Ay, and soon

Was light enough to make my heart ache too: She told me truths I asked for . . .

'twas my fault . . . 'That Romney could not love me, if

he would, As men call loving; there are bloods

that flow Together, like some rivers, and not mix.

Through contraries of nature. He indeed

Was set to wed me, to espouse my

Act out a rash opinion,—and, once

So just a man and gentle, could not choose

But make my life as smooth as marriage-ring,

Bespeak me mildly, keep me a cheerful house,

With servants, brooches, all the Would suffer steadily and never flowers I liked,

And pretty dresses, silk the whole year round' . .

At which I stopped her,- 'This for me. And now 'For him.'—She murmured,—truth

grew difficult; She owned, 'Twas plain a man like

Romney Leigh Required a wife more level to him-

self. If day by day he had to bend his height

To pick up sympathies, opinions. thoughts,

And interchange the common talk of life

Which helps a man to live as well as talk.

heavily taxed. His days were Who buys a staff

To fit the hand, that reaches but the knee?

He'd feel it better to be forced to miss

The perfect joy of married suited pairs, Who, bursting through the separat-

ing hedge Of personal dues with that sweet

eglantine

Of equal love, keep saying, "So we think, "It strikes us,—that's our fancy."

—When I asked If earnest will, devoted love, em-

ployed In youth like mine, would fail to raise

me up,-As two strong arms will always raise a child

To a fruit hung overhead? she sighed and sighed .

'That could not be, she feared. 'You take a pink,

You dig about its roots and water it,

And so improve it to a garden-pink, But will not change it to a heliotrope,

The kind remains. And then, the harder truth-

This Romney Leigh, so rash to leap a pale,

So bold for conscience, quick for martyrdom,

flinch.

But suffer surely and keenly, when his class

Turned shoulder on him for a shameful match,

And set him up as nine-pin in their talk,

To bowl him down with jestings.'-There, she paused:

And when I used the pause in doubting that

we feared-

touch him, more

In his high conscience (if the things should be),

Than, when the queen sits in an upper room,

The horses in the street can spatter her! '-

A moment, hope came,—but the lady

That door and nicked the lock, and shut it out,

Observing wisely that, 'the tender heart Which made him over-soft to a lower

Could scarcely fail to make him

sensitive

To a higher,—how they thought, and what they felt.'

"Alas, alas," said Marian, rocking slow

The pretty baby who was near asleep, The eyelids creeping over the blue balls.-

"She made it clear, too clear—I saw the whole!

And yet who knows if I had seen my way

Straight out of it, by looking, though 'twas clear,

Unless the generous lady, 'ware of For church now?

Had set her own house all a-fire for

To light me forwards? Leaning on my face

Her heavy agate eyes which crushed my will

She told me tenderly (as when men

To a bedside to tell people they must die),

'She knew of knowledge,-ay, of knowledge, knew,

That Romney Leigh had loved her formerly;

And she loved him, she might say, now the chance

Was past . . . but that, of course, he never guessed.—

For something came between them . . . something thin

We wronged him after all in what As a cobweb . . . catching every fly of doubt

Suppose such things should never To hold it buzzing at the windowpane

And help to dim the daylight. Ah, man's pride

Or woman's—which is greatest? most averse

To brushing cobwebs? Well, but she and he

Remained fast friends; it seemed not more than so.

Because he had bound his hands and could not stir:

An honourable man, if somewhat rash: And she, not even for Romney,

would she spill A blot . . . as little even as a tear . . .

Upon his marriage-contract,—not to gain

A better joy for two than came by that For, though I stood between her

heart and heaven, She loved me wholly."

Did I laugh or curse? I think I sate there silent, hearing all. Ay, hearing double,—Marian's tale,

at once, And Romney's marriage-vow, " I'll keep to THEE,"

Which means that woman-serpent. Is it time

"Lady Waldemar spoke more." Continued Marian, "but, as when a

Will pass out through the sweetness of a song

Beyond it, voyaging the uphill road.— Even so, mine wandered from the things I heard,

To those I suffered. It was afterward

I shaped the resolution to the act.

For many hours we talked. What need to talk?

The fate was clear and close; it touched my eves;

But still the generous lady tried to

The case afloat, and would not let it And argued, struggled upon Marian's

side. Which was not Romney's! though

she little knew

What ugly monster would take up the end,-What griping death within the drown-

ing death Was ready to complete my sum of

death.

I thought,—Perhaps he's sliding now the ring

Upon that woman's finger . . . She went on:

"The lady, failing to prevail her way, Upgathered my torn wishes from the ground,

And pieced them with her strong benevolence;

And, as I thought I could breathe freer

Away from England, going without pause.

Without farewell, -just breaking with a jerk

The blossomed offshoot from my thorny life,-

She promised kindly to provide the means,

With instant passage to the colonies And full protection,—' would commit me straight

To one who once had been her waiting-maid

And had the customs of the world, intent

On changing England for Australia Herself, to carry out her fortune

For which I thanked the Lady Walde-

As men upon their death-beds thank last friends

Who lay the pillow straight: it is not much.

And yet 'tis all of which they are capable.

This lying smoothly in a bed to die. And so, 'twas fixed :- and so, from day to day,

The woman named, came in to visit me."

Just then, the girl stopped speaking -sate erect. And stared at me as if I had been a

ghost (Perhaps I looked as white as any ghost)

With large-eyed horror. "Does God make," she said,

" All sorts of creatures, really, do you think?

Or is it that the Devil slavers them So excellently, that we come to doubt Who's strongest, He who makes, or he who mars?

I never liked the woman's face, or

Or ways: it made me blush to look at her: It made me tremble if she touched

my hand; And when she spoke a fondling word.

I shrank.

As if one hated me, who had power to hurt: And, every time she came, my veins

ran cold. As somebody were walking on my grave.

At last I spoke to Lady Waldemar:

'Could such an one be good to trust?' I asked. Whereat the lady stroked my cheek

and laughed Her silver-laugh (one must be born to laugh,

To put such music in it)—' Foolish girl,

Your scattered wits are gathering wool beyond

The sheep-walk reaches !—leave the thing to me.'

And therefore, half in trust, and half in scorn

That I had heart still for another fear

In such a safe despair, I left the thing.

"The rest is short. I was obedient: I wrote my letter which delivered him

From Marian, to his own prosperities,

lady ?-hush.-

I never blame the lady. Ladies who Sit high, however willing to look

Will scarce see lower than their dainty feet:

And Lady Waldemar saw less than I. With what a Devil's daughter I went

The swine's road, headlong over a precipice,

In such a curl of hell-foam caught and choked,

No shriek of soul in anguish could pierce through

To fetch some help. They say there's help in heaven

For all such cries. But if one cries from hell . . .

upon that side.

"A woman . . . hear me,—let me The feeble blood, the heavy-headed make it plain,-

A woman . . . not a monster . . . No need to bring their damnable both her breasts

Made right to suckle babes . . . she took me off,

A woman also, young and ignorant, And heavy with my grief, my two poor eyes

Near washed away with weeping, till the trees.

The blessed unaccustomed trees and fields.

Ran either side the train, like stranger dogs

Unworthy of any notice,-took me off,

So dull, so blind, and only half alive, Not seeing by what road, nor by what ship,

Nor toward what place, nor to what end of all.-

Men carry a corpse thus, - past the doorway, past

The garden-gate, the children's playground, up

The green lane,—then they leave it in the pit.

to cheek

With him who stinks since Friday. "But suppose;

And followed that bad guide. The To go down with one's soul into the grave,-

To go down half dead, half alive, I say,

And wake up with corruption. . . . cheek to cheek

With him who stinks since Friday! There it is.

And that's the horror of 't, Miss Leigh. "You feel?

You understand?—no, do not look at me.

But understand. The blank, blind. weary way

Which led . . . where'er it led . . . away, at least:

The shifted ship . . . to Sydney or to France . . .

Still bound, wherever else, to another land:

What then?—the heavens are deaf The swooning sickness on the dismal sea,

The foreign shore, the shameful house, the night,

grief, . .

drugged cup. And yet they brought it! Hell's so

prodigal Of devil's gifts . . . hunts liberally in

packs. Will kill no poor small creature of the wilds

But fifty red wide throats must smoke at it,-

As HIS at me . . . when waking up at last . .

I told you that I waked up in the grave.

" Enough so !- it is plain enough so. True,

We wretches cannot tell out all our wrong,

Without offence to decent happy folk. I know that we must scrupulously

With half-words, delicate reserves, the thing

Which no one scrupled we should feel in full.

To sleep and find corruption, cheek Let pass the rest, then; only leave my oath

Upon this sleeping child,-man's violence.

Not man's seduction, made me what I am.

As lost as . . . I told him I should be lost;

When mothers fail us, can we help ourselves?

That's fatal !—And you call it being lost,

That down came next day's noon and caught me there

Half gibbering and half raving on the floor,

And wondering what had happened up in heaven,

That suns should dare to shine when God Himself

Was certainly abolished.

"I was mad,—
How many weeks, I know not,—
many weeks.

I think they let me go, when I was mad,

They feared my eyes and loosed me, as boys might

A mad dog which they had tortured.
Up and down

I went by road and village, over tracts Of open foreign country, large and strange,

Crossed everywhere by long thin poplar-lines

Like fingers of some ghastly skeleton Hand

Through sunlight and through moonlight evermore

Pushed out from hell itself to pluck me back,

And resolute to get me, slow and sure;
White every readside Christ woon his

While every roadside Christ upon his cross

Hung reddening through his gory wounds at me,

And shook his nails in anger, and came down

To follow a mile after, wading up
The low vines and green wheat, crying 'Take the girl!

She's none of mine from henceforth.' Then, I knew

(But this is somewhat dimmer than the rest)

The charitable peasants gave me bread

And leave to sleep in straw; and twice they tied,

At parting, Mary's image round my neck—

How heavy it seemed! as heavy as a stone;

A woman has been strangled with less

A woman has been strangled with less weight:

I threw it in a ditch to keep it clean And ease my breath a little, when none looked;

I did not need such safeguards: brutal men

Stopped short, Miss Leigh, in insult, when they had seen

My face,—I must have had an awful look.

And so I lived: the weeks passed on.

—I lived.
'Twas living my old tramp-life o'er

again,
But, this time, in a dream, and hunted

round By some prodigious Dream-fear at my

back Which ended, yet: my brain cleared

presently,
And there I sate, one evening, by the
road,

I, Marian Erle, myself, alone, undone, Facing a sunset low upon the flats,

As if it were the finish of all time,— The great red stone upon my sepulchre,

Which angels were too weak to roll away.

SEVENTH BOOK

"THE woman's motive? shall we daub ourselves

With finding roots for nettles? 'tis soft clay

And easily explored. She had the means,

The monies, by the lady's liberal

grace,
In trust for that Australian scheme

and me,
Which so, that she might clutch with

both her hands,

And chink to her naughty uses undis turbed,

She served me (after all it was not strange; 'Twas only what my mother would

have done)
A motherly, unmerciful, good turn,

" Well. everywhere

common still .

The blue of heaven is larger than the cloud:

A miller's wife at Clichy took me in And spent her pity on me, -made me

And merely very reasonably sad.

She found me a servant's place in Paris where

I tried to take the cast-off life again. And stood as quiet as a beaten ass. Who, having fallen through over-

loads, stands up To let them charge him with another

pack.

"A few months so. My mistress, young and light.

Was easy with me, less for kindness than

Because she led, herself, an easy

Betwixt her lover and her looking-

Scarce knowing which way she was praised the most.

She felt so pretty and so pleased all

She could not take the trouble to be cross,

But, sometimes, as I stooped to tie her shoe,

Would tap me softly with her slender foot.

Still restless with the last night's dancing in't.

And say, 'Fie, pale-face! are you English girls All grave and silent? mass-book

still, and Lent? And first-communion colours on

your cheeks, Worn past the time for't? little fool, be gay 1'

At which she vanished, like a fairy, through

A gap of silver laughter.

"Came an hour When all went otherwise. She did not speak.

But clenched her brows, and clipped me with her eyes

As if a viper with a pair of tongs,

after. There are nettles Too far for any touch, yet near enough

But smooth green grasses are more To view the writhing creature.then at last:

'Stand still there, in the holy Virgin's name

Thou Marian: thou'rt no reputable girl.

Although sufficient dull for twenty saints!

I think thou mock'st me and my house,' she said:

Confess, thou'lt be a mother in a month

Thou mask of saintship.

"Could I answer her? The light broke in so: it meant that then, that ?

I had not thought of that, in all my thoughts.-

Through all the cold, numb aching of my brow.

Through all the heaving of impatient life

Which threw me on death at intervals,—through all

The upbreak of the fountains of my heart

The rains had swelled too large: it could mean that? Did God make mothers out of vic-

tims, then. And set such pure amens to hideous

deeds? Why not? He overblows an ugly

grave With violets which blossom in the spring.

And I could be a mother in a month ! I hope it was not wicked to be glad. I lifted up my voice and wept, and

laughed. To heaven, not her, until it tore my throat.

'Confess, confess!' what was there to confess,

Except man's cruelty, except my wrong?

Except this anguish, or this ecstasy? This shame, or glory? The light woman there

Was small to take it in: an acorn-cup Would take the sea in sooner.

"'Good,' she cried; 'Unmarried and a mother, and she laughs!

These unchaste girls are always impudent.

Get out, intriguer! leave my house, and trot:

I wonder you should look me in the face,

With such a filthy secret.'

"Then I rolled My scanty bundle up, and went my way,

Washed white with weeping, shuddering head and foot

With blind hysteric passion, staggering forth

Beyond those doors. 'Twas natural, of course,

She should not ask me where I meant to sleep;

I might sleep well beneath the heavy Seine,

Like others of my sort; the bed was laid

For us. But any woman, womanly, Had thought of him who should be in a month,

The sinless babe that should be in a month.

And if by chance he might be warmer housed

Than underneath such dreary, dripping eaves."

I broke on Marian there. "Yet she herself,

A wife, I think, had scandals of her own,

A lover, not her husband."

"Ay," she said,
"But gold and meal are measured
otherwise:

I learnt so much at school," said Marian Erle.

"O crooked world," I cried, "ridiculous

If not so lamentable! It's the way With these light women of a thrifty vice.

My Marian,—always hard upon the rent

In any sister's virtue! while they keep

Their chastity so darned with perfidy, That, though a rag itself, it looks as well

Across a street, in balcony or coach,

As any stronger stuff might. For my part,

I'd rather take the wind-side of the stews
Than touch such women with my

finger-end!
They top the poor street-walker by

their lie,
And look the better for being so much

worse:
The devil's most devilish when respectable.

But you, dear, and your story."

"All the rest Is here," she said, and signed upon the child.

"I found a mistress-sempstress who was kind

And let me sew in peace among her girls;

And what was better than to draw the threads

All day and half the night, for him, and him?

And so I lived for him, and so he lives, And so I know, by this time, God lives too."

She smiled beyond the sun, and ended so.

And all my soul rose up to take her part

Against the world's successes, virtues, fames.

"Come with me, sweetest sister," I returned,
And sit within my house, and do me

good
From henceforth, thou and thine! ye

are my own From henceforth. I am lonely in the

world,
And thou art lonely, and the child is

half An orphan. Come,—and, henceforth,

thou and I
Being still together, will not miss a
friend,

Nor he a father, since two mothers shall

Make that up to him. I am journeying south.

And in my Tuscan home I'll find a niche.

And set thee there, my saint, the child and thee,

And burn the lights of love before thy face.

And ever at thy sweet look cross my-

From mixing with the world's prosperities:

That so, in gravity and holy calm. We two may live on toward the truer life."

She looked me in the face and answered not.

Nor signed she was unworthy, nor gave thanks. But took the sleeping child and held it

To meet my kiss, as if requiting me And trusting me at once. And thus, at once.

I carried him and her to where I lived: She's there now, in the little room. asleep,

I hear the soft child-breathing through the door:

And all three of us, at to-morrow's

Pass onward, homeward, to our Italy. Oh, Romney Leigh, I have your debts to pay.

And I'll be just and pay them.

But yourself! To pay your debts is scarcely difficult: To buy your life is nearly impossible, Being sold away to Lamia. My head aches;

I cannot see my road along this dark : Nor can I creep and grope, as fits the dark.

For these foot-catching robes of womanhood:

A man might walk a little . . . but I! —He loves

What stops his marriage, and destroys his peace,—

Or what, perhaps, shall simply trouble him,

Until she only need to touch his sleeve With just a finger's tremulous white flame

Saying, "Ah,—Aurora Leigh! a pretty tale,

A very pretty poet! I can guess The motive "—then, to catch his eyes In this; and now he's lost! through in hers.

And yow she does not wonder,—and they two

To break in laughter, as the sea along A melancholy coast, and float up higher.

In such a laugh, their fatal weeds of love!

Av. fatal, av. And who shall answer me

Fate has not hurried tides; and if to-night

My letter would not be a night too late,—

An arrow shot into a man that's dead, To prove a vain intention? Would I show

The new wife vile, to make the husband mad?

No. Lamia! shut the shutters, bar the doors

From every glimmer on thy serpentskin!

I will not let thy hideous secret out To agonise the man I love—I mean The friend I love . . . as friends love. It is strange.

To-day while Marian told her story, like

To absorb most listeners, how I listened chief

To a voice not hers, nor yet that enemy's. Nor God's in wrath . . . but one

that mixed with mine Long years ago, among the garden-

trees. And said to me, to me too, "Be my

wife. Aurora!" It is strange, with what a

Of yearning passion, as a snow of ghosts

The Lamia-woman, -and I, write to Might beat against the impervious doors of heaven,

> I thought, "Now, if I had been a woman, such

> As God made women, to save men by love.-

> By just my love I might have saved this man,

And made a nobler poem for the world

Than all I have failed in." But I failed besides

me alone!

And, by my only fault, his empty To fill the chair up of my cousin's

Sucks in, at this same hour, a wind from hell

To keep his hearth cold, make his casements creak

For ever to the tune of plague and sin-O Romney, O my Romney, O my friend!

My cousin and friend! my helper, when I would.

My love, that might be! mine!

Why, how one weeps When one's too weary! Were a witness by,

He'd say some folly . . . that I loved the man.

Who knows?...and make me laugh again for scorn.

At strongest, women are as weak in

As men, at weakest, vilest, are in soul: So, hard for women to keep pace with men!

As well give up at once, sit down at

And weep as I do. Tears, tears! why, we weep?

'Tis worth inquiry?-That we've shamed a life.

Or lost a love, or missed a world, perhaps?

By no means. Simply, that we've walked too far.

Or talked too much, or felt the wind i' the east,-

And so we weep, as if both body and

Broke up in water—this way.

Poor mixed rags Forsooth we're made of, like those other dolls

That lean with pretty faces into fairs. It seems as if I had a man in me, Despising such a woman.

Yet indeed. To see a wrong or suffering moves us

To undo it, though we should undo ourselves;

Ay, all the more, that we undo our-

That's womanly, past doubt, and not Is found, and finds her home with

A natural movement, therefore, on Myself, Aurora. Which good news, my part,

And save him from a devil's company! We're all so,—made so—'tis our woman's trade

To suffer torment for another's ease. The world's male chivalry has perished

But women are knights-errant to the last:

And, if Cervantes had been greater still.

He had made his Don a Donna.

So it clears And so we rain our skies blue.

Put away This weakness. If, as I have just now said.

A man's within me.—let him act himself.

Ignoring the poor conscious trouble of

That's called the woman merely. I will write

Plain words to England,—if too late, too late,-

If ill-accounted, then accounted ill; We'll trust the heavens with something.

"Dear Lord Howe, You'll find a story on another leaf That's Marian Erle's,—what noble

friend of yours She trusted once, through what flagi-

tious means To what disastrous ends ;—the story's

I found her wandering on the Paris quays,

A babe upon her breast—unnatural Unseasonable outcast on such snows Unthawed to this time. I will tax in this

Your friendship, friend,—if that convicted She

Be not his wife yet, to denounce the

To himself,—but, otherwise, to let them pass

On tip-toe like escaping murderers, And tell my cousin, merely—Marian lives.

such a friend,

'She's found.'

Will help to make him merry in his Your liking surely had done worse for

I send it, tell him, for my marriage gift.

As good as orange-water for the nerves.

Or perfumed gloves for headache.though aware

sick:

I mean the new love this time . since last year.

Such quick forgetting on the part of

Is any shrewder trick upon the cards To enrich them? pray instruct me how it's done.

First, clubs,—and while you look at clubs, it's spades :

That's prodigy. The lightning strikes a man.

And when we think to find him dead and charred . . .

Why, there he is on a sudden, playing pipes Beneath the splintered elm-tree!

Crime and shame And all their hoggery trample your

smooth world. Nor leave more foot-marks than Apollo's kine.

Whose hoofs were muffled by the thieving god

In tamarisk-leaves and myrtle. I'm so sad.

So weary and sad to-night. I'm somewhat sour .-

Forgive me. To be blue and shrew at once.

Exceeds all toleration except yours: But yours, I know, is infinite. Farewell.

To-morrow we take train for Italy Speak gently of me to your gracious wife.

As one, however far, shall yet be near In loving wishes to your house."

I sign. And now I'll loose my heart upon a page, This-

'' Lady Waldemar, I'm very glad I never liked you; which you knew so well,

me much.

Than has your loathing, though the last appears

Sufficiently unscrupulous to hurt. And not afraid of judgment. Now. there's peace

Between our faces -I stand off, as if That he, except of love, is scarcely I judged a stranger's portrait and pronounced

Indifferently the type was good or had .

What matter to me that the lines are false

I ask you? Did I ever ink my lips By drawing your name through them as a friend's.

Or touch your hands as lovers do? thank God

I never did: and, since you're proved so vile.

Ay, vile, I say,—we'll show it presently,-

I'm not obliged to nurse my friend in

Or wash out my own blots, in counting vours.

Or even excuse myself to honest souls Who seek to touch my lip or clasp my palm.-

'Alas, but Lady Waldemar came first!

"'Tis true, by this time, you may near me so

That you're my cousin's wife. You've gambled deep

As Lucifer, and won the morning-star In that case,—and the noble house of Leigh

Must henceforth with its good roof shelter you:

I cannot speak and burn you up between Those rafters, I who am born a Leigh,

—nor speak And pierce your breast through

Romney's, I who live

His friend and cousin !--so, you are safe. You two

Must grow together like the tares and wheat

Till God's great fire.—But make the best of time.

You spared me, in your turn, to like " And hide this letter! let it speak no more

Than I shall, how you tricked poor I spare you common curses. Marian Erle,

grave

Within her green hope's pretty garden-ground;

Ay, sent her forth with some one of vour sort

which she fled

With curses in her eyes and ears and throat,

Her whole soul choked with curses,mad, in short,

The foreign hedgeless country, lone and lost,-

So innocent, male-fiends might slink The ground must hurt him,—it was within

Remote hell-corners, seeing her so defiled!

"But you,-you are a woman and more bold.

To do you justice, you'd not shrink to face . .

We'll say, the unfledged life in the other room,

Which, treading down God's corn, you trod in sight

Of all the dogs, in reach of all the guns,-

Marian's babe, her poor unfathered child,

Her yearling babe !-you'd face him when he wakes

And opens up his wonderful blue eyes: You'd meet them and not wink perhaps, nor fear

God's triumph in them and supreme revenge,

When, righting His creation's balancescale

(You pulled as low as Tophet) to the

Of most celestial innocence! For me Who am not as bold, I own those infant eyes

Have set me praying.

"While they look at heaven, No need of protestation in my words Against the place you've made them! let them look!

heavens, be sure;

" Ponder this.

And set her own love digging her own If haply you're the wife of Romney Leigh

(For which inheritance beyond your birth

You sold that poisonous porridge called your soul),

To a wicked house in France,—from I charge you, be his faithful and true wife!

Keep warm his hearth and clean his board, and, when

He speaks, be quick with your obedience; And madly scouring up and down for Still grind your paltry wants and low

desires To dust beneath his heel; though,

even thus,

writ of old, 'Ye shall not yoke together ox and

ass. The nobler and ignobler. Ay, but

Shall do your part as well as such ill

things Can do aught good. You shall not

vex him,-mark, You shall not vex him, . . . jar him when he's sad,

Or cross him when he's eager. Understand

To trick him with apparent sympathies,

Nor let him see thee in the face too

And unlearn thy sweet seeming. Pay the price Of lies, by being constrained to lie on

still; 'Tis easy for thy sort: a million

more Will scarcely damn thee deeper.

" Doing which,

You are very safe from Marian and myself: We'll breathe as softly as the infant

here, And stir no dangerous embers. Fail

a point, And show our Romney wounded, ill-

content, Tormented in his home, . . . we open mouth.

They'll do your business with the And such a noise will follow, the Last Trump's

even to you;

You'll have no pipers after: Romney

(I know him) push you forth as none

All other men declaring it well done: While women, even the worst, your like, will draw

Their skirts back, not to brush you in the street;

And so I warn you. I'm . . . Aurora Leigh."

The letter written, I felt satisfied. The ashes, smouldering in me, were thrown out

By handfuls from me: I had writ my

And wept my tears, and now was cool and calm;

And, going straightway to the neighbouring room,

I lifted up the curtains of the bed Where Marian Erle, the babe upon her arm,

Both faces leaned together like a pair Of folded innocences, self-complete, Each smiling from the other, smiled and slept.

There seemed no sin, no shame, no wrath, no grief.

I felt, she too, had spoken words that night.

But softer certainly and said to God. Who laughs in heaven perhaps, that such as I

Should make ado for such as she.— " Defiled '

I wrote? "defiled" I thought her? Stoop.

Stoop lower, Aurora! get the angels' To creep in somewhere, humbly, on

your knees, Within this round of sequestration

white

In which they have wrapt earth's foundlings, heaven's elect!

The next day, we took train to Italy And fled on southward in the roar of steam.

The marriage-bells of Romney must be loud.

To sound so clear through all! I was not well:

Wil scarcely seem more dreadful, And truly, though the truth is like a

I could not choose but fancy, half the

I stood alone i' the belfry, fifty bells Of naked iron, mad with merriment (As one who laughs and cannot stop himself),

All clanking at me, in me, over me, Until I shrieked a shriek I could not

And swooned with noise,—but still, along my swoon;

Was 'ware the baffled changes backward rang,

Prepared, at each emerging sense, to beat

And crash it out with clangour. I was weak;

I struggled for the posture of my soul

In upright consciousness of place and time.

But evermore, 'twixt waking and asleep,

Slipped somehow, staggered, caught at Marian's eyes

A moment (it is very good for strength To know that someone needs you to be strong),

And so recovered what I called myself, For that time.

I just knew it when we swept Above the old roofs of Dijon. Lyons dropped

A spark into the night, half trodden

Unseen. But presently the winding Rhone

Washed out the moonlight large along his banks.

Which strained their yielding curves out clear and clean

To hold it—shadow of town and castle blurred

Upon the hurrying river. Such an air Blew thence upon the forehead—half an air

And half a water,—that I leaned and looked;

Then, turning back on Marian, smiled to mark

That she looked only on her child, who slept.

His face towards the moon too.

So we passed

close.

And shot through tunnels, like a lightning-wedge

great Thor-hammers driven through the rock,

Which, quivering through the intestine blackness, splits,

And lets it in at once: the train swept

Athrob with effort, trembling with resolve.

The fierce denouncing whistle wailing

And dving off smothered in the shuddering dark.

While we, self-awed, drew troubled breath, oppressed

As other Titans, underneath the pile And nightmare of the mountains. Out, at last,

To catch the dawn affoat upon the land!

-Hills, slung forth broadly and gauntly everywhere,

Not crampt in their foundations, pushing wide Rich outspreads of the vineyards and

the corn

(As if they entertained i' the name of France),

While, down their straining sides, streamed manifest A soil as red as Charlemagne's

knightly blood, To consecrate the verdure. Some one

"Marseilles!" And lo, the city of

Marseilles, With all her ships behind her, and beyond.

The scimitar of ever-shining sea. For right-hand use, bared blue against the sky!

That night we spent between the purple heaven

And purple water: I think Marian slept:

But I, as a dog a-watch for his master's foot.

Who cannot sleep or eat before he hears,

I sate upon the deck and watched all night,

The liberal open country and the And listened through the stars for Italy.

> Those marriage-bells I spoke of sounded far.

> As some child's go-cart in the street beneath

> To a dving man who will not pass the

And knows it, holding by a hand he loves.

I, too, sate quiet, satisfied with death. Sate silent: I could hear my own soul speak,

And had my friend,—for Nature comes sometimes

And says, "I am ambassador for God."

I felt the wind soft from the land of souls:

The old miraculous mountains heaved in sight,

One straining past another along the

The way of grand dull Odyssean ghosts Athirst to drink the cool blue wine of

And stare on voyagers. Peak pushing peak

They stood: I watched beyond that Tyrian belt Of intense sea betwixt them and the

ship Down all their sides the misty olive-

woods Dissolving in the weak congenial moon,

And still disclosing some brown convent-tower

That seems as if it grew from some brown rock.-

Or many a little lighted village, dropt Like a fallen star, upon so high a point. You wonder what can keep it in its place

From sliding headlong with the waterfalls

Which drop and powder all the myrtlegroves

With spray of silver. Thus my Italy Was stealing on us. Genoa broke with day:

The Dorias' long pale palace striking out.

From green hills in advance of the white town.

A marble finger dominant to ships.

Seen glimmering through the uncer- The ou'spread city) straight toward tain grey of dawn.

But then I did not think, "my Italy;"

I thought, "my father!" O my father's house,

Without his presence!—Places are

too much Or else too little, for immortal man: Too little, when love's May o'ergrows

the ground,-Too much, when that luxuriant wealth

of green Is rustling to our ankles in dead leaves. 'Tis only good to be, or here or there, Because we had a dream on such a

Or this or that,—but, once being

wholly waked, And come back to the stone without

the dream. We trip upon't,—alas! and hurt our-

selves:

Or else it falls on us and grinds us flat, The heaviest grave-stone on this burying earth.

-But while I stood and mused, a quiet touch

Fell light upon my arm, and, turning round.

A pair of moistened eyes convicted mine.

"What, Marian! is the babe astir so soon?"

"He sleeps," she answered; "I have crept up thrice,

And see you sitting, standing, still at watch.

I thought it did you good till now, but now " "But now," I said, "you leave the

child alone." "And you're alone," she answered,— From Vincent Carrington:—" My

and she looked As if I, too, were something, Sweet the help

Of one we have helped! Thanks, Marian, for that help.

I found a house, at Florence, on the hill

Of Bellosguardo. 'Tis a tower that

A post of double-observation o'er The valley of Arno (holding as a hand | A sign of you, Miss Leigh,

Fiesole

And Mount Morello and the setting

The Vallombrosan mountains to the right,

Which sunrise fills as full as crystal cups

Wine-filled, and red to the brim because it's red.

No sun could die, nor yet be born, un-

By dwellers at my villa: morn and

Were magnified before us in the pure Illimitable space and pause of sky,

Intense as angels' garments blanched with God,

Less blue than radiant. From the outer wall

Of the garden, dropped the mystic floating grey

Of olive-trees (with interruptions green From maize and vine), until 'twas caught and torn

On that abrupt black line of cypresses Which signed the way to Florence. Beautiful

The city lay along the ample vale, Cathedral, tower and palace, piazza and street;

The river trailing like a silver cord Through all, and curling loosely, both before

And after, over the whole stretch of

Sown whitely up and down its opposite slopes,

With farms and villas.

Many weeks had passed. No word was granted.—Last, a letter came

dear Miss Leigh,

You've been as silent as a poet should, When any other man is sure to speak. If sick, if vexed, if dumb, a silver-

piece Will split a man's tongue,—straight he speaks and says,

'Received that cheque.' But you! . . . I send you funds

To Paris, and you make no sign at all. Remember I'm responsible and wait

" Meantime your book Is eloquent as if you were not dumb: And common critics, ordinarily deaf To such fine meanings, and, like deaf men, loth

To seem deaf, answering chance-wise,

ves or no,

'It must be,' or 'it must not' (most pronounced When least convinced), pronounce for

once aright:

You'd think they really heard,—and so they do . . .

The burr of three or four who really

And praise your book aright: Fame's smallest trump Is a great ear-trumpet for the deaf as

posts. No other being effective. Fear not,

friend;

We think, here, you have written a good book.

And you, a woman! It was in youves. Ifelt 'twas in you: yet I doubted

If that od-force of German Reichen-

Which still from female finger-tips burns blue.

Could strike out, as our masculine white heats.

To quicken a man. Forgive me. All my heart Is quick with yours, since, just a fort-

night since. I read your book and loved it.

"Will you love My wife, too? Here's my secret, I

might keep A month more from you! but I vield

Because I know you'll write the sooner for't,-

Most women (of your height even) counting love

Life's only serious business. Who's

my wife That shall be in a month? you ask?

nor guess?

Remember what a pair of topaz eyes You once detected, turned against the wall.

That morning, in my London painting- | (And, grant me, the presentment had rocm:

The face half-sketched, and slurred; the eyes alone!

But you . . . you caught them un with yours, and said

' Kate Ward's eyes, surely.'-Now. I own the truth.

I had thrown them there to keep them safe from Jove;

They would so naughtily find out their way

To both the heads of both my Danaës. Where just it made me mad to look at them.

Such eyes! I could not paint or think of eves But those,—and so I flung them into

paint And turned them to the wall's care.

Ay, but now I've let them out, my Kate's! I've painted her

(I'll change mystyle, and leave mythologies).

The whole sweet face; it looks upon my soul

Like a face on water, to beget itself. A half-length portrait, in a hanging cloak

Like one you wore once; 'tis a little fraved:

I pressed, too, for the nude harmonious arm-

But she . . . she'd have her way, and have her cloak; She said she could be like you only

And would not miss the fortune. Ah.

my friend. You'll write and say she shall not miss

vour love Through meeting mine? in faith, she

would not change: She has your books by heart, more than my words.

And quotes you up against me till I'm pushed

Where, three months since, her eyes were! nay, in fact,

Nought satisfied her but to make me paint

Your last book folded in her dimpled hands.

Instead of my brown palette, as I wished

been newer),

She'd grant me nothing: I ve com- Through a golden ring. I thought so pounded for

month,

And gladly too. 'Tis pretty, to remark

How women can love women of your sort.

And tie their hearts with love-knots to your feet.

Grow insolent about you against

And put us down by putting up the lip,

As if a man, -there are such, let us own.

Who write not ill,—remains a man.

poor wretch,
While you——! Write weaker than Aurora Leigh,

And there'll be women who believe of

(Besides my Kate) that if you walked on sand

You would not leave a foot-print. " Are you put

To wonder by my marriage, like poor Leigh?

Ward!' he said. 'Kate 'Kate Ward!' he said anew.

'I thought . . .' he said, and stopped. -ʻ $^{\cdot}$ I did not think \ldots

And then he dropped to silence.
"Ah, he's changed. I had not seen him, you're aware, for long.

But went of course. I have not touched on this

Through all this letter,—conscious of your heart,

And writing lightlier for the heavy fact.

As clocks are voluble with lead.

" How poor, To say I'm sorry. Dear Leigh, dearest Leigh!

In those old days of Shropshire, -pardon me.-

When he and you fought many a field of gold

On what you should do, or you should not do

Make bread or verses (it just came to

I thought you'd one day draw a silken The statuette on the console (of peace

foolishly,

The naming of the wedding-day next The event proved, -for you went more opposite

To each other, month by month, and year by year,

Until this happened. God knows best, we say,

But hoarsely. When the fever took him first,

Just after I had writ to you in France, They tell me Lady Waldemar mixed drinks

And counted grains, like any salaried nurse.

Excepting that she wept too. Then Lord Howe,

You're right about Lord Howe! Lord Howe's a trump;

And yet, with such in his hand, a man like Leigh

May lose, as he does. There's an end to all .-

Yes, even this letter, though the second sheet

May find you doubtful. Write a word for Kate:

Even now she reads my letters like a wife. And, if she sees her name, I'll see her

smile. And share the luck. So, bless you.

friend of two! I will not ask you what your feeling is

At Florence, with my pictures. can hear

Your heart a-flutter over the snowhills:

And, just to pace the Pitti with you once,

I'd give a half-hour of to-morrow's walk

With Kate . . . I think so. Vincent Carrington."

The noon was hot; the air scorched like the sun.

And was shut out. The closed persiani threw

Their long-scored shadows on my villa-floor,

And interlined the golden atmosphere Straight, still,—across the pictures on the wall,

young Love

And Psyche made one marble by a -Why, this room stifles. Better

The low couch where I leaned, the Best have air, air, although it comes table near.

The vase of lilies Marian pulled last night

(Each green leaf and each white leaf ruled in black

As if for writing some new text of fate),

And the open letter, rested on my knee.-

But there, the lines swerved, trembled, though I sate

Untroubled . . . plainly . . . reading it again

And three times. Well, he's married; that is clear.

No wonder that he's married, nor much more

That Vincent's therefore, "sorry." Why, of course,

The lady nursed him when he was not well,

Mixed drinks, -unless nepenthe was the drink,

'Twas scarce worth telling. But a man in love

Will see the whole sex in his mistress' hood,

The prettier for its lining of fair rose; Although he catches back, and says at last,

"I'm sorry." Sorry. Lady Walde-

At prettiest, under the said hood, preserved

From such a light as I could hold to her face To flare its ugly wrinkles out to

shame,-

Is scarce a wife for Romney, as friends judge, Aurora Leigh, or Vincent Carring-

ton,-That's plain. And if he's "con-

scious of my heart" . . . Perhaps it's natural, though the

phrase is strong (One's apt to use strong phrases, be-

ing in love); And even that stuff of "fields of gold," "gold rings,"

And what he "thought," poor Vincent! what he "thought,"

May never mean enough to ruffle me.

burn than choke;

with fire,

Throw open blinds and windows to the noon

And take a blister on my brow instead

Of this dead weight! best, perfectly be stunned By those insufferable cicale, sick

And hoarse with rapture of the summer-heat,

That sing like poets, till their hearts break . . . sing
Till men say, "It's too tedious."

Books succeed. And lives fail. Do I feel it so, at last?

Kate loves a worn-out cloak for being like mine.

While I live self-despised for being myself, And yearn toward some one else, who

yearns away From what he is, in his turn. Strain

For ever, yet gain no step? Are we

such. We cannot, with our admirations

Our tip-toe aspirations, touch a thing

Tnat's higher than we? is all a dismal flat, And God alone above each,—as the

O'er level lagunes, to make them

shine and stink,-Laying stress upon us with immediate

flame, While we respond with our miasmal

fog, And call it mounting higher, because

we grow More highly fatal?

Tush, Aurora Leigh! You wear your sackcloth looped in Cæsar's way,

And brag your failings as mankind's. Be still.

There is what's higher, in this very world,

Than you can live, or catch at. Stand aside,

And look at others—instance little Kate!

She'll make a perfect wife for Carrington.

She always has been looking round the earth

For something good and green to alight upon

And nestle into, with those softwinged eyes

Subsiding now beneath his manly hand

'Twixt trembling lids of inexpressive joy:

I will not scorn her, after all, too much,
That so much she should love me.

That so much she should love me. A wise man

Can pluck a leaf, and find a lecture in't;

And I, too, . . . God has made me,
—I've a heart
That's capable of worship, love, and

loss;
We say the same of Shakspeare's I'll

We say the same of Shakspeare's. I'll be meek,

And learn to reverence, even this poor myself.

The book, too—pass it. "A good book," says he,

And you a woman." I had laughed at that,

But long since. I'm a woman,—it is true;

Alas, and woe to us, when we feel it most!

Then, least care have we for the crowns and goals,

And compliments on writing our good books.

The book has some truth in it. I be-

lieve:
And truth outlives pain, as the soul

does life.

I know we talk our Phædons to the

Through all the dismal faces that we

make, O'er-wrinkled with dishonouring agony

From any mortal drug. I have written truth,

And I a woman; feebly, partially, Inaptly in presentation, Romney'll add.

Because a woman. For the truth itself, That's neither man's nor woman's, but just God's;

None else has reason to be proud of truth:

Himself will see it sifted, disenthralled, And kept upon the height and in the light,

As far as, and no farther, than 'tis truth;

For,—now He has left off calling firmaments

And strata, flowers and creatures, very good,—

He says it still of truth, which is His own.

Truth, so far, in my book;—the truth which draws

Through all things upwards; that a twofold world

Must go to a perfect cosmos. Natural things

And spiritual,—who separates those two

In art, in morals, or the social drift, Tears up the bond of nature and brings death,

Paints futile pictures, writes unreal verse,

Leads vulgar days, deals ignorantly with men,
Is wrong, in short, at all points. We

divide
This apple of life, and cut it through

the pips,—
The perfect round which fitted Venus'

The perfect round which fitted Venus hand
Has perished utterly as if we ate

Both halves. Without the spiritual, observe,

The natural's impossible;—no form, No motion! Without sensuous, spiritual

Is inappreciable;—no beauty or power!

And in this twofold sphere the twofold man

(And still the artist is intensely a man) Holds firmly by the natural, to reach The spiritual beyond it,—fixes still The type with mortal vision, to pierce through,

With eyes immortal, to the antetype Some call the ideal,—better called the

And certain to be called so presently

When things shall have their names. But finds some coupling with the Look long enough

and lined.

You'll catch Antinous somewhere in that clay.

As perfect-featured as he yearns at

From marble pale with beauty; then persist, And, if your apprehension's compe-

tent.

You'll find some fairer angel at his back.

As much exceeding him, as he the boor.

And pushing him with empyreal disdain

For ever out of sight. Ay, Carring-

Is glad of such a creed! an artist must, Who paints a tree, a leaf, a common stone,

With just his hand, and finds it suddenly

A-piece with and conterminous to his soul.

Why else do these things move him, leaf or stone?

The bird's not moved, that pecks at a spring-shoot;

Nor yet the horse, before a quarry, agraze:

But man, the twofold creature, apprehends

The twofold manner, in and outwardly.

And nothing in the world comes single to him.

A mere itself, -cup, column, or candle-

All patterns of what shall be in the Mount;

The whole temporal show related royally,

And built up to eterne significance Through the open arms of God. "There's nothing great

Nor small," has said a poet of our day (Whose voice will ring beyond the curfew of eve

And not be thrown out by the matin's

And truly, I reiterate . . . nothing's small!

No lily-muffled hum of a summer-bee, !

spinning stars:

On any peasant's face here, coarse No pebble at your foot, but proves a sphere: No chaffinch, but implies the cheru-

> bim: And—glancing on my own thin,

veined wrist,-In such a little tremour of the blood

The whole strong clamour of a vehement soul Doth utter itself distinct. Earth's

crammed with heaven. And every common bush afire with

God: But only he who sees, takes off his

shoes: The rest sit round it, and pluck black-

berries, And daub their natural faces un-

aware

More and more, from the first similitude.

Truth, so far, in my book! a truth which draws

From all things upwards. I, Aurora, still

Have felt it hound me through the wastes of life As Jove did Io: and, until that

Hand Shall overtake me wholly, and, on my

head. Lay down its large unfluctuating

peace, The feverish gadfly pricks me up

and down, It must be. Art's the witness of

what Is Behind this show. If this world's show were all,

Then imitation would be all in Art;

There, Jove's hand gripes us !- For we stand here, we,

If genuine artists, witnessing for God's

Complete, consummate, undivided work:

—That not a natural flower can grow on earth.

Without a flower upon the spiritual side.

Substantial, archetypal, all aglow With blossoming causes,—not so far

away,

But we, whose spirit-sense is somewhat cleared,

May catch at something of the bloom and breath,—

Too vaguely apprehended, though indeed

Still apprehended, consciously or not, And still transferred to picture, music, verse.

For thrilling audient and beholding souls

By signs and touches which are known to souls,—

How known, they know not,—why, they cannot find,

So straight call out on genius, say, "A man

Produced this,"—when much rather they should say,

"'Tis insight, and he saw this."

Thus is Art
Selr-magnified in magnifying a
truth

Which, fully recognised, would change the world

And shift its morals. If a man could feel,

Not one day, in the artist's ecstasy, But every day, feast, fast, or workingday,

The spiritual significance burn through The hieroglyphic of material shows, Henceforward he would paint the globe with wings.

And reverence fish and fowl, the bull, the tree,

And even his very body as a man,— Which now he counts so vile, that all the towns

Make offal of their daughters for its use

On summer-nights, when God is sad in heaven

To think what goes on in His recreant world

He made quite other; while that moon He made

To shine there, at the first love's covenant,

Shines still, convictive as a marriagering

Before adulterous eyes.

How sure it is, That, if we say a true word, instantly We feel 'tis God's not ours, and pass it on

As bread at sacrament, we taste and pass

Nor handle for a moment, as indeed We dared to set up any claim to such!

And I—my poem;—let my readers talk;

I'm closer to it—I can speak as well:
I'll say, with Romney, that the book is weak,

The range uneven, the points of sight obscure,

The music interrupted.

Let us go.
The end of woman (or of man, I think)
Is not a book. Alas, the best of books
Is but a word in Art, which soon
grows cramped,

Stiff, dubious-statured with the weight of years,

And drops an accent or digamma down

Some cranny of unfathomable time, Beyond the critic's reaching. Art itself,

We've called the higher life, still must feel the soul

Live past it. For more's felt than is perceived,
And more's perceived than can be

interpreted,
And Love strikes higher with his lam-

And Love strikes higher with his lambent flame

Than Art can pile the faggots.

Is it so?

When Jove's hand meets us with composing touch,

And when, at last, we are hushed and satisfied,—

Then, Io does not call it truth, but love?

Well, well! my father was an Englishman:

My mother's blood in me is not so strong

That I should bear this stress of Tuscan noon

And keep my wits. The town, there, seems to seethe

In this Medæan boil-pot of the sun,

And all the patient hills are bubbling round

As if a prick would leave them flat.

Does heaven

Keep far off, not to set us in a blaze?

Not so,—let drag your fiery fringes, heaven,

And burn us up to quiet! Ah, we know

Too much here, not to know what's best for peace;

We have too much light here, not to want more fire

To purify and end us. We talk, talk, Conclude upon divine philosophies,

And get the thanks of men for hopeful books;

Whereat we take our own life up, and . . . pshaw!

Unless we piece it with another's life (A yard of silk to carry out our lawn), As well suppose my little handkerchief

Would cover Samminiato, church and all,

If out I threw it past the cypresses, As, in this ragged, narrow life of mine, Contain my own conclusions.

But at least We'll shut up the persiani, and sit down.

And when my head's done aching, in the cool.

Write just a word to Kate and Carrington.

May joy be with them! she has chosen well,

And he not ill.

I should be glad, I think, Except for Romney. Had he married Kate,

I surely, surely, should be very glad. This Florence sits upon me easily, With native air and tongue. My graves are calm,

And do not too much hurt me. Marian's good,

Gentle and loving,—lets me hold the child,

Or drags him up the hills to find me flowers And fill those vases, ere I'm quite

awake,—
The grandiose red tulins, which grow

The grandiose red tulips, which grow wild,

Or else my purple lilies, Dante blew To a larger bubble with his prophetbreath;

Or one of those tall flowering reeds which stand

In Arno like a sheaf of sceptres, left

By some remote dynasty of dead gods,

To suck the stream for ages and get green,

And blossom wheresoe'er a hand divine

Had warmed the place with ichor. Such I've found

At early morning, laid across my bed,

And woke up pelted with a childish laugh

Which even Marian's low precipitous "hush"

Had vainly interposed to put away,—
While I, with shut eyes, smile and
motion for

The dewy kiss that's very sure to come

From mouth and cheeks, the whole child's face at once

Dissolved on mine,—as if a nosegay burst

Its string with the weight of roses overblown,

And dropt upon me. Surely I should be glad.

The little creature almost loves me now,

And calls my name . . . "Alola," stripping off

The r's like thorns, to make it smooth enough

To take between his dainty, milk-fed lips,

God love him! I should certainly be glad,

Except, God help me, that I'm sorrowful,

Because of Romney.

Romney, Romney! Well, This grows absurd!—too like a tune that runs

I' the head, and forces all things in the world,

Wind, rain, the creaking gnat or stuttering fly,

To sing itself and vex you;—yet perhaps

A paltry tune you never fairly liked, Some "I'd be a butterfly," or "C'est l'amour:"

We're made so,—not such tyrants to ourselves,

We are not slaves to nature. Some of us

Are turned, too, overmuch like some Or else their rest in quiet crypts,poor verse

With a trick of ritournelle: the same From heat and noise!-from those thing goes

And comes back ever.

Vincent Carrington Is "sorry," and I'm sorry; but he's We covet for the soul, the body's strong

To mount from sorrow to his heaven To die and rot. Even so, Aurora, of love.

And when he says at moments, "Poor. poor Leigh,

Who'll never call his own, so true a

So fair a face even,"—he must quickly | Had fed us fatter, therefore? we have

The pain of pity in the blush he has Where herbage ends? we want the

By his very pitying eyes. The snow, for him,

Has fallen in May, and finds the whole earth warm,

And melts at the first touch of the The creature who looks inward to green grass.

But Romney,—he has chosen, after

I think he had as excellent a sun To see by, as most others, and perhaps

Has scarce seen really worse than some of us,

When all's said. Let him pass. I'm not too much

A woman, not to be a man for once. And bury all my Dead like Alaric, Depositing the treasures of my soul

In this drained water-course, and, letting flow

The river of life again, with commerce-ships

songs.

Blow, winds, and help us.

Ah, we mock ourselves With talking of the winds! perhaps Who paint for pastime, in their as much

With other resolutions. How it Spruce auto-vestments flowered with weighs.

This hot, sick air! and how I covet There are, too, who believe in hell,

couch,

With silver curtains drawn on tink- Life's problem on these sands beling rings!

laid by

cicale, sav.

And this more vexing heart-beat.

So it is: part.

ends

Our aspiration, who bespoke our

So far in the East. The Occidental

climbed

beast's part now.

And tire of the angel's ?—Men define a man.

The creature who stands front-ward to the stars.

himself.

The tool-wright, laughing creature. 'Tis enough: We'll say instead, the inconsequent

creature, man,-

For that's his specialty. creature else

Conceives the circle, and then walks the square?

Loves things proved bad, and leaves a thing proved good? You think the bee makes honey half

a year,

To loathe the comb in winter, and desire

The little ants' food rather? But a man-

Note men!—they are but women after all,

And pleasure-barges, full of silks and As women are but Auroras!—there are men

Born tender, apt to pale at a trodden worm.

favourite dream.

crocus-flames:

and lie:

The Dead's provision on the river's There are, who waste their souls in working out

twixt two tides,

And end,-" Now give us the beast's And emulous of their hues: I recogpart, in death.

Alas, long-suffering and most patient God.

Thou need'st be surelier God to bear with us

Than even to have made us! Thou, aspire, aspire

From henceforth for me! Thou who hast, Thyself.

Endured this fleshhood, knowing how, as a soaked

And sucking vesture, it would drag us

And choke us in the melanchoiv Deep, Sustain me, that, with Thee, I walk these waves,

Resisting!—breathe me upward, Thou for me

Aspiring, Who art the Way, the Truth, the Life.—

That no truth henceforth seem indifferent.

No way to truth laborious, and no

Not even this life I live, intolerable!

The days went by. I took up the old days

With all their Tuscan pleasures, worn and spoiled,-

Like some lost book we dropt in the long grass

On such a happy summer-afternoon When last we read it with a loving friend.

And find in autumn, when the friend is gone.

The grass cut short, the weather changed, too late,

And stare at, as at something wonder-

sorrow,-thinking how two hands, before,

Had held up what is left to only one. And how we smiled when such a vehe ment nail

Impressed the tiny dint here, which presents

And mournfully I lived. I knew the birds

And insects,—which look fathered by With such prodigious eyes in such the flowers

nised

The moths, with that great overpoise of wings

Which makes a mystery of them how

They can stop flying: butterflies, that bear

Upon their blue wings such red embers round,

They seem to scorch the blue air into holes

Each flight they take: and fireflies, that suspire In short soft lapses of transported

Across the tingling Dark, while over-

head The constant and inviolable stars

Outburn those lights-of-love: melodious owls

(If music had but one note and was:

'Twould sound just so), and all the silent swirl

Of bats, that seem to follow in the air Some grand circumference of shadowy dome

To which we are blind: and then the nightingales,

Which pluck our heart across a gar den-wall

(When walking in the town) and carry

So high into the bowery almond-trees. We tremble and are afraid, and feel

The golden flood of moonlight una-

Dissolved the pillars of the steady earth

And made it less substantial. And I

The harmless opal snakes, and largemouthed frogs

Those noisy vaunters of their shallow streams) And lizards, the green lightnings of

the wall, Which, if you sit down still, nor sigh

too loud, This verse in fire for ever! Tenderly Will flatter you and take you for a

stone, And flash familiarly about your feet

small heads!—

I knew them (though they had somewhat dwindled from

My childish imagery), and kept in mind

How last I sate among them equally, In fellowship and mateship, as a child Will bear him still toward insect, beast, and bird,

Before the Adam in him has foregone All privilege of Eden,—making friends And talk, with such a bird or such a goat,

And buying many a two-inch-wide rush-cage

To let out the caged cricket on a tree, Saying, "Oh, my dear grillino, were you cramped?

And are you happy with the ilexleaves?

And do you love me who have let you

Say yes in singing, and I'll understand."

But now the creatures all seemed farther off.

No longer mine, nor like me; only there,

A gulf between us. I could yearn indeed,

Like other rich men, for a drop of dew To cool this heat,—a drop of the early dew,

The irrecoverable child-innocence

(Before the heart took fire and withered life)

When childhood might pair equally with birds;

But now . . . the birds were grown too proud for us!

Alas, the very sun forbids the dew.

And I, I had come back to an empty nest,

Which every bird's too wise for. How I heard

My father's step on that deserted ground,

His voice along that silence, as he told

The names of bird and insect, tree and flower,

And all the presentations of the stars 'Across Valdarno, interposing still "My child," "my child." When

fathers say "my child,"
'Tis easier to conceive the universe,

And life's transitions down the steps of law.

I rode once to the little mountainhouse

As fast as if to find my father there, But, when in sight of 't, within fifty vards.

I dropped my horse's bridle on his neck

And paused upon his flank. The house's front

Was cased with lingots of ripe Indian corn

In tesselated order, and device

Of golden patterns: not a stone of wall

Uncovered,—not an inch of room to

A vine-leaf. The old porch had disappeared;

And, in the open doorway, sate a girl

At plaiting straws,—her black hair strained away To a scarlet kerchief caught beneath

her chin
In Tuscan fashion,—her full ebon

eyes,
Which looked too heavy to be lifted so

Which looked too heavy to be lifted so, Still dropt and lifted toward the mulberry-tree

On which the lads were busy with their staves

In shout and laughter, stripping all the boughs As bare as winter, of those summer

leaves

My father had not changed for all the

silk In which the ugly silkworms hide

themselves.

Enough. My horse recoiled before
my heart—

I turned the rein abruptly. Back we went

As fast, to Florence.

That was trial enough
Of graves. I would not visit, if I
could.

My father's, or my mother's any more, To see if stone-cutter or lichen beat So early in the race or throw my

So early in the race, or throw my flowers,

Which could not out-smell heaven, c sweeten earth.

They live too far above, that I should

So far below to find them: let me

That rather they are visiting my

This life here (undeveloped yet to

And that they drop upon me, now and then.

For token or for solace, some small weed

Least odorous of the growths of paradise,

To spare such pungent scents as kill with joy.

My old Assunta, too, was dead, was dead-

O land of all men's past! for me alone, It would not mix its tenses. I was

It seemed, like others, -only not in heaven.

And, many a Tuscan eve, I wandered down

The cypress alley, like a restless ghost That tries its feeble ineffectual breath Upon its own charred funeral-brands put out

Too soon,—where, black and stiff, stood up the trees

Against the broad vermilion of the skies.

Such skies!—all clouds abolished in a sweep

Of God's skirt, with a dazzle to Before a woman makes a pounce on ghosts and men,

As down I went, saluting on the bridge

The hem of such, before 'twas caught away

Beyond the peaks of Lucca. Underneath.

The river, just escaping from the And be possessed by none of them! weight

Of that intolerable glory, ran

In acquiescent shadow murmurously: And up, beside it, streamed the festafolk

With fellow-murmurs from their feet and fans

(With issimo and ino and sweet poise Of vowels in their pleasant scandalous | Or why you look so pale still, since talk),

Returning from the grand-duke's | -Such most surprising riddance of dairy-farm

Before the trees grew dangerous at

(For, "trust no tree by moonlight." Tuscans say),

To eat their ice at Doni's tenderly,-Each lovely lady close to a cavalier Who holds her dear fan while she feeds her smile

On meditative spoonfuls of vanille. He breathing hot protesting vows of love.

Enough to thaw her cream, and scorch his beard. "

'Twas little matter. I could pass them by

Indifferently, not fearing to be known, No danger of being wrecked upon a friend.

And forced to take an iceberg for an isle!

The very English, here, must wait to learn

To hang the cobweb of their gossip

And catch a fly. I'm happy. sublime,

This perfect solitude of foreign lands! To be, as if you had not been till

And were then, simply that you chose to be: To spring up, not be brought forth

from the ground, Like grasshoppers at Athens, and

skip thrice

plants you in her hair!-And

possess, yourself, A new world all alive with creatures

New sun, new moon, new flowers, new people—ah,

no right

In one, to call your name, inquire your where,

Or what you think of Mister Someone's book,

Or Mister Other's marriage, or decease. Or how's the headache which you had last week,

it's gone?

one's life

Comes next one's death; it's disembodiment

Without the pang. I marvel, people choose

To stand stockstill like fakirs, till the

Grows on them, and they cry out, self-admired.

"How verdant and how virtuous!" Well, I'm glad: Or should be, if grown foreign to my-

self

As surely as to others.

Musing so, I walked the narrow unrecognising streets.

Where many a palace-front peers gloomily

Through stony vizors iron-barred (prepared

Alike, should foe or lover pass that

For guest or victim), and came wandering out

Upon the churches with mild open doors And plaintive wail of vespers, where a

few. Those chiefly women, sprinkled round

in blots Upon the dusky pavement, knelt and

prayed Toward the altar's silver glory. Oft a ray

(I liked to sit and watch) would tremble out.

Just touch some face more lifted, more in need.

Of course a woman's - while I dreamed a tale

To fit its fortunes. There was one who looked

As if the earth had suddenly grown too large For such a little humpbacked thing as

she: The pitiful black kerchief round her neck

Sole proof she had had a mother. One, again,

Looked sick for love—seemed praying some soft saint

To put more virtue in the new fine And dropped my head upon the pave-

She spent a fortnight's meals on, yesterday.

That cruel Gigi might return his eves

From Giuliana. There was one, so old,

So old, to kneel grew easier than to stand,-

So solitary, she accepts at last

Our Lady for her gossip, and frets on Against the sinful world which goes its rounds

In marrying and being married, just the same

As when 'twas almost good and had the right

(Her Gian alive, and she herself eighteen).

And yet, now even, if Madonna willed, She'd winatern in Thursday's lottery. And better all things. Did she dream for nought.

That, boiling cabbage for the fastday's soup,

It smelt like blessed entrails? such a dream

For nought: would sweetest Mary cheat her so. And lose that certain candle, straight

and white As any fair grand-duchess in her teens.

Which otherwise should flare here in a week?

Benigna sis, thou beauteous Queen of heaven!

I sate there musing, and imagining Such utterance from such faces: poor blind souls

That writhe toward heaven along the devil's trail,—

Who knows, I thought, but He may stretch His hand

And pick them up?'tis written in the Book,

He heareth the young ravens when they cry:

And yet they cry for carrion .- O my God.-

And we, who make excuses for the

We do it in our measure. Then I knelt,

ment too.

And prayed, since I was foolish in desire

I said.

And only listen to the run and beat Of this poor, passionate, helpless blood-

And then I lay, and spoke not. But He heard

in heaven. So many Tuscan evenings passed the

same! I could not lose a sunset on the bridge, And would not miss a vigil in the

church.

And liked to mingle with the outdoor crowd

So strange and gay and ignorant of my face,

For men you know not, are as good as trees.

And only once, at the Santissima, I almost chanced upon a man I knew.

Sir Blaise Delorme. He saw me certainly.

And somewhat hurried, as he crossed himself,

The smoothness of the action,—then half bowed,

But only half, and merely to my shade,

I slipped so quick behind the porphyry plinth,

And left him dubious if 'twas really I, Or peradventure Satan's usual trick To keep a mounting saint uncanonised.

But I was safe for that time, and he

The argent angels in the altar-flare Absorbed his soul next moment. The

good man! In England we were scarce acquaint-

ances, That here in Florence he should keep

my thought Beyond the image on his eye, which

came And went: and yet his thought

disturbed my life: For, after that, I oftener sate at home On evenings, watching how they fined

themselves With gradual conscience to a perfect night,

Like other creatures, craving offal- Until the moon, diminished to a curve.

That He would stop His ears to what Lay out there, like a sickle for His hand Who cometh down at last to reap the

earth.

At such times, ended seemed my trade of verse;

I feared to jingle bells upon my robe Before the four-faced silent cherubim: With God so near me, could I sing of God ?

I did not write, nor read, nor even think.

But sate absorbed amid the quickening glooms,

Most like some passive broken lump of salt

Dropt in by chance to a bowl of ceno-

To spoil the drink a little, and lose itself.

Dissolving slowly, slowly, until lost.

EIGHTH BOOK

ONE eve it happened, when I sate alone.

Alone, upon the terrace of my tower. A book upon my knees, to counter-

The reading that I never read at all. While Marian, in the garden down below,

Knelt by the fountain I could just hear thrill

The drowsy silence of the exhausted day

And peeled a new fig from that purple heap

In the grass beside her,—turning out the red

To feed her eager child (who sucked

With vehement lips across a gap of

As he stood opposite, face and curls a-flame

With that last sun-ray crying, "give me, give,"

And stamping with imperious babyfeet:

We're all born princes)—something startled me,-

The laugh of sad and innocent souls. that breaks

Abruptly, as if frightened at itself;

'Twas Marian laughed. I saw her glance above In sudden shame that I should hear

her laugh.

And straightway dropped my eyes upon my book,

And knew, the first time, 'twas Boccaccio's tales.

The Falcon's.—of the lover who for

love. Destroyed the best that loved him.

Some of us Do it still, and then we sit and laugh no more:

Laugh you, sweet Marian! you've the right to laugh,

Since God Himself is for you, and a child !

For me there's somewhat less,-and so, I sigh.

The heavens were making room to hold the night. The sevenfold heavens unfolding all

their gates

To let the stars out slowly (prophe-

close-approaching advent, not discerned),

While still the cue-owls from the cypresses

Of the Poggio called and counted every pulse Of the skyey palpitation. Gradually

The purple and transparent shadows slow Had filled up the whole valley to the

brim. And flooded all the city, which you

As some drowned city in some enchanted sea.

Cut off from nature,—drawing you who gaze,

With passionate desire, to leap and plunge,

And find a sea-king with a voice of vaves.

And treacherous soft eyes, and slippery locks

You cannot kiss but you shall bring away

Their salt upon your lips. The Duomo bell

Strikes ten, as if it struck ten fathoms | Although you thought to have shut a down.

So deep; and fifty churches answer

The same, with fifty various instances. Some gaslights tremble along squares and streets;

The Pitti's palace-front is drawn in fire:

And, past the quays, Maria Novella's Place.

In which the mystic obelisks stand

Triangular, pyramidal, each based On a single trine of brazen tortoises.

To guard that fair church, Buonarotti's Bride.

That stares out from her large blind dial-eyes,

Her quadrant and armillary dials. black

With rhythms of many suns and moons, in vain

Inquiry for so rich a soul as his.— Methinks I have plunged, I see it all so clear . . .

And, oh my heart . . . the sea-king! In my ears

The sound of waters. There he stood. my king!

I felt him, rather than beheld him. Up

I rose, as if he were my king indeed. And then sate down, in trouble at myself,

And struggling for my woman's empery.

'Tis pitiful: but women are so made: We'll die for you, perhaps,—'tis probable;

But we'll not spare you an inch of our full height:

We'll have our whole just stature. five feet four,

Though laid out in our coffins: pitiful!

"-You, Romney!---Lady Waldemar is here?"

He answered in a voice which was not his.

"I have her letter; you shall read it soon:

But first, I must be heard a little, I, Who have waited long and travelled far for that,

tedious book

And farewell. Ah, you dog-eared such a page,

And here you find me."

Did he touch my hand, Or but my sleeve? I trembled, hand and foot,-

He must have touched me.-" Will you sit?" I asked,

And motioned to a chair; but down he sate,

A little slowly, as a man in doubt, Upon the couch beside me, -couch and chair

Being wheeled upon the terrace.

"You are come, My cousin Romney ?-this is wonder-

ful. But all is wonder on such summer-

nights; And nothing should surprise us any

Who see that miracle of stars. Behold."

I signed above, where all the stars were out,

As if an urgent heat had started there A secret writing from a sombre page, blank last moment, crowded suddenly

With hurrying splendours.

"Then you do not know"-

He murmured.

"Yes, I know," I said, "I know. I had the news from Vincent Carring-

And yet I did not think you'd leave the work

In England, for so much even .though, of course,

You'll make a work-day of your holiday,

And turn it to our Tuscan people's

Who much need helping since the Austrian boar

(So bold to cross the Alp by Lombardy

And dash his brute front unabashed against

The steep snow-bosses of that shield of God

Who soon shall rise in wrath and shake it clear),

Came hither also,—raking up our That Vincent did, before he chose his

And olive-gardens with his tyrannous

And rolling on our maize with all his swine.

"You had the news from Vincent Carrington,"

He echoed,—picking up the phrase beyond,

As if he knew the rest was merely talk To fill a gap and keep out a strong wind.

"You had, then, Vincent's personal news?"

" His own."

I answered. "All that ruined world of yours

Seems crumbling into marriage. Carrington

Has chosen wisely."

"Do you take it so?" He cried, "and is it possible at last"...

He paused there,—and then, inward to himself,

"Too much at last, too late !--yet certainly "

(And there his voice swayed as an Alpine plank

That feels a passionate torrent underneath)

"The knowledge, had I known it, first or last.

Could scarce have changed the actual case for me.

And best, for her, at this time."

Nay, I thought, He loves Kate Ward, it seems, now, like a man,

Because he has married Lady Walde-

Ah, Vincent's letter said how Leigh was moved

To hear that Vincent was betrothed

With what cracked pitchers go we to deep wells

In this world! Then I spoke,—"I did not think,

My cousin, you had ever known Kate Ward."

"In fact I never knew her. enough

wife

For other reasons than those topaz eyes

I've heard of. Not to undervalue them.

For all that. One takes up the world with eyes."

-Including Romney Leigh, I thought again,

Albeit he knows them only by repute. How vile must all men be, since he's

His deep pathetic voice, as if he To smooth with eye and accent,guessed

I did not surely love him, took the His possible presence. Excellently word:

"You never got a letter from Lord Howe

A month back, dear Aurora?"

"None," I said.

"I felt it was so," he replied: "Yet. strange!

Sir Blaise Delorme has passed through Florence?"

By chance I saw him in Our Lady's church

(I saw him, mark you, but he saw not me),

Clean-washed in holy water from the count

Of things terrestrial,—letters and the rest:

He had crossed us out together with

Ay, strange; but only strange that To fire some holy taper with: Lord good Lord Howe

Preferred him to the post because of Writes letters good for all things but pauls.

For me I'm sworn to never trust a man-

At least with letters."

"There were facts to tell,-To smooth with eye and accent. Howe supposed . .

Well, well, no matter! there was dubious need;

You heard the news from Vincent Carrington.

And yet perhaps you had been startled

To see me, dear Aurora, if you had And shook a half-hour after. Have read

That letter."

-Now he sets me down as vexed. I think I've draped myself in woman's

To a perfect purpose. Oh, I'm vexed, it seems!

My friend Lord Howe deputes his friend Sir Blaise,

To break as softly as a sparrow's egg That lets a bird out tenderly, the

Of Romney's marriage to a certain saint:

indicate -

You've played your part, my Lady Waldemar,-

As I've played mine.

"Dear Romney," I began, "You did not use, of old, to be so like A Greek king coming from a taken Troy,

'Twas needful that precursors spread your path

With three-piled carpets, to receive your foot

And dull the sound of 't. For myself, be sure,

Although it frankly ground the gravel here, I still can bear it. Yet I'm sorry,

too, To lose this famous letter, which Sir

Blaise Has twisted to a lighter absently

Howe

to lose:

And many a flower of London gossipry

Has dropt wherever such a stem broke off,-

Of course I know that, lonely among my vines,

Where nothing's talked of, save the blight again,

And no more Chianti! Still the letter's use

As preparation... Did I start indeed?

Last night I started at a cockchafer, vou learnt

No more of women, 'spite of privilege,

Than still to take account too seriously

Of such weak flutterings? Why, we like it, sir,—

We get our powers and our effects that way.

The trees stand stiff and still at time of frost,

If no wind tears them; but, let summer come,

When trees are happy,—and a breath avails

To set them trembling through a million leaves

In luxury of emotion. Something less

It takes to move a woman: let her start

And shake at pleasure,—nor conclude at yours,

The winter's bitter,—but the summer's green."

He answered, "Be the summer ever green

With you, Aurora!—though you sweep your sex

With somewhat bitter gusts from where you live

Above them,—whirling downward from your heights

Your very own pine-cones, in a grand disdain

Of the lowland burrs with which you scatter them.

So high and cold to others and yourself,

A little less to Romney, were unjust, And thus, I would not have you. Let it pass:

I feel content, so. You can bear indeed

My sudden step beside you: but for me,
'Twould move me sore to hear your

softened voice,—
Aurora's voice,—if softened unaware

In pity of what I am."

Ah friend, I thought, As husband of the Lady Waldemar You're granted very sorely pitiable! And yet Aurora Leigh must guard her voice

From softening in the pity of your case,

As if from lie or licence. Certainly

We'll soak up all the slush and soil of life

With softened voices, ere we come to you.

At which I interrupted my own thought

And spoke out calmly. "Let us ponder, friend.

Whate'er our state, we must have made it first; And though the thing displease us.

ay, perhaps
Displease us warrantably, never

doubt
That other states, though possible

once, and then Rejected by the instinct of our lives,— If then adopted, had displeased us

more
Than this, in which the choice, the

will, the love, Has stamped the honour of a patent

From henceforth. What we choose,

may not be good;
But, that we choose it, proves it good
for us

Potentially, fantastically, now

Or last year, rather than a thing we saw,

And saw no need for choosing. Moths

will burn Their wings,—which proves that

light is good for moths,
Who else had flown not, where they
agonise."

"Ay, light is good," he echoed, and there paused.

And then abruptly, . . . " Marian. Marian's well?"

I bowed my head, but found no word.
"Twas hard

To speak of her to Lady Waldemar's New husband. How much did he know, at last?

How much? how little?——He would take no sign,

But straight repeated,—" Marian. Is she well?"

"She's well," I answered.

She was there in sight An hour back, but the night had drawn her home; Where still I heard her in an upper

Her low voice singing to the child in bed. Who restless with the summer-heat

and play

And slumber snatched at noon, was long sometimes

At falling off, and took a score of

And mother-hushes, ere she saw him sound.

"She's well," I answered.

"Here?" he asked.

"Yes, here."

He stopped and sighed. "That shall be presently,

But now this must be. I have words I did not make it, to make light of it:

And would be alone to say them, I with you,

And no third troubling."

"Speak then," I returned. "She will not vex you."

At which, suddenly He turned his face upon me with its smile.

As if to crush me. "I have read your book,

Aurora.

"You have read it," I replied, "And I have writ it,—we have done with it.

And now the rest?"

"The rest is like the first." He answered,-" for the book is in my heart,

Lives in me, wakes in me, and dreams

My daily bread tastes of it,—and my

Which has no smack, of it, I pour it "Alas," I answered, "is it so, in-

It seems unnatural drinking.'

I took the word up; "Never waste your wine.

The book lived in me ere it lived in

you; I know it closer than another does, And that it's foolish, feeble, and When you and I, upon my birthday afraid,

And all unworthy so much compliment.

Beseech you, keep your wine, -and, when you drink,

Still wish some happier fortune to your friend,

Than even to have written a far better book."

He answered gently, "That is consequent:

The poet looks beyond the book he has made.

Or else he had not made it. If a man Could make a man, he'd henceforth be a god

In feeling what a little thing is man: It is not my case. And this special book,

It stands above my knowledge, draws me up;

'Tis high to me. It may be that the book

Is not so high, but I so low, instead; Still high to me. I mean no compliment:

I will not say there are not, young or

Male writers, ay, or female,-let it pass,

Who'll write us richer and completer

A man may love a woman perfectly, And yet by no means ignorantly maintain

A thousand women have not larger eves:

Enough that she alone has looked at

With eyes that, large or small, have won his soul.

And so, this book, Aurora, -so, your book."

deed?"

And then was silent.

" Is it so, indeed," He echoed, "that alas is all your word?"

I said,—"I'm thinking of a far-off June,

once,

Discoursed of life and art, with both Because she was a woman and a untried.

I'm thinking, Romney, how 'twas morning then,

And now 'tis night."

"And now," he said, "'tis night."

"I'm thinking," I resumed, "'tis somewhat sad

That if I had known, that morning in the dew.

My cousin Romney would have said such words

On such a night, at close of many years,

In speaking of a future book of mine, It would have pleased me better as a hope,

Than as an actual grace it can at all. That's sad, I'm thinking."

"Ay," he said, "'tis night."

"And there," I added lightly, "are the stars!

And here, we'll talk of stars, and not of books.'

"You have the stars," he murmured,-"it is well:

Be like them ! shine, Aurora, on my dark,

Though high and cold and only like a

And for this short night only,-you, who keep

The same Aurora of the bright June

That withered up the flowers before my face,

And turned me from the garden ever-

Because I was not worthy. Oh, deserved,

Deserved! That I, who verily had not learnt

God's lesson half, attaining as a dunce

To obliterate good words with fractious thumbs

And cheat myself of the context.—I should push

Aside, with male ferocious impudence. The world's Aurora who had conned My soul out once before you, ere I her part

On the other side the leaf! ignore her

queen,

And had no beard to bristle through her song,-

My teacher, who has taught me with a book, My Miriam, whose sweet mouth.

when nearly drowned I still heard singing on the shore!

Deserved. That here I should look up into the

stars And miss the glory "...

"Can I understand?" "You speak wildly, I broke in. Romney Leigh,

Or I hear wildly. In that morningtime

We recollect, the roses were too red.

The trees too green, reproach too natural

If one should see not what the other

And now, it's night, remember: we have shades In place of colours; we are now grown

cold. And old, my cousin Remney. Par-

don me,-I'm very happy that you like my book,

And very sorry that I quoted back A ten years' birthday; 'twas so mad

a thing In any woman, I scarce marvel much You took it for a venturous piece of spite,

Provoking such excuses, as indeed I cannot call you slack in."

"Understand," He answered sadly, "something, if

but so. This night is softer than an English day,

And men may well come hither when they're sick

To draw in easier breath from larger air.

'Tis thus with me; I've come to you,

-to you, My Italy of women, just to breathe

go, As humble as God makes me at the

last

(I thank Him), quite out of the way of men,

And yours, Aurora,—like a punished child,

His cheeks all blurred with tears and naughtiness,
To silence in a corner Lam come

To silence in a corner. I am come To speak, beloved "...

"Wisely, cousin Leigh,

And worthily of us both!"

Yes, worthily;
For this time I must speak out and confess

That I, so truculent in assumption once,

So absolute in dogma, proud in aim, And fierce in expectation,—I, who felt

The whole world tugging at my skirts for help,

As if no other man than I, could pull, Nor woman, but I led her by the hand.

Nor cloth hold, but I had it in my coat,—

Do know myself to-night for what I was

On that June-day, Aurora. Poor bright day,

Which meant the best . . . a woman and a rose, . . .

And which I smote upon the cheek with words,

Until it turned and rent me! Young you were,

That birthday, poet, but you talked the right:

While I, . . . I built up follies like a wall

To intercept the sunshine and your face.

Your face! that's worse."

"Speak wisely, cousin Leigh."

Yes, wisely, dear Aurora, though too late:

But then, not wisely. I was heavy then,

Inen,
And stupid, and distracted with the
cries

If tortured prisoners in the polished brass

of that Phalarian bull, society,— Which seems to bellow bravely like ten bulls,

But, if you listen, moans and cries instead

Despairingly, like victims tossed and gored

And trampled by their hoofs, I heard the cries

Too close: I could not hear the angels lift

A fold of rustling air, nor what they said

To help my pity. I beheld the world As one great famishing carnivorous mouth,—

A huge, deserted, callow, black, bird Thing,

With piteous open beak that hurt my heart,

Till down upon the filthy ground I dropped,

And tore the violets up to get the worms.

'Worms, worms,' was all my cry: an open mouth,

A gross want, bread to fill it to the lips,

No more! That poor men narrowed their demands

To such an end, was virtue, I supposed,

Adjudicating that to see it so

Was reason. Oh, I did not push the case

Up higher, and ponder how it answers, when

The rich take up the same cry for themselves,

Professing equally,—' an open mouth, A gross want, food to fill us, and no more!'

Why that's so far from virtue, only vice

Finds reason for it! That makes libertines:

That slurs our cruel streets from end to end

With eighty-thousand women in one smile,

Who only smile at night beneath the gas:

The body's satisfaction and no more, Being used for argument against the soul's,

Here too! the want, here too, implying the right.

-How dark I stood that morning in the sun,

My best Aurora, though I saw your eyes,—

When first you told me . . . oh, I recollect

The words . . . and how you lifted your white hand,

And how your white dress and your burnished curls

Went greatening round you in the still blue air.

As if an inspiration from within

Had blown them all out when you spoke the same,

Even these,—'You will not compass your poor ends

Of barley-feeding and material ease,

Without the poet's individualism

To work your universal. It takes a soul,

To move a body,—it takes a highsouled man,

To move the masses . . . even to a cleaner stye:

It takes the ideal, to blow an inch inside

The dust of the actual: and your Fouriers failed,

Because not poets enough to understand

That life develops from within.' I say

Your words,—I could say other words of yours; For none of all your words has been

For none of all your words has been more lost

Than sweet verbena, which, being brushed against,

Will hold you three hours after by the smell,

In spite of long walks on the windy hills.

But these words dealt in sharper perfume,—these

were ever on me, stinging through my dreams,

And saying themselves for ever o'er my acts

Like some unhappy verdict. That I failed,

Is certain. Stye or no stye, to contrive

The swine's propulsion toward the precipice,

Proved easy and plain. I subtly organised And ordered, built the cards up high and higher,

Till, some one breathing, all fell flat again;

In setting right society's wide wrong, Mere life's so fatal! So I failed indeed Once, twice, and oftener,—hearing through the rents

Of obstinate purpose, still those words of yours,

'You will not compass your poor ends, not you!'

But harder than you said them; every time

Still farther from your voice, until they came

To overcrow me with triumphant scorn

Which vexed me to resistance. Set down this

For condemnation,—I was guilty here:

I stood upon my deed and fought my doubt,
As men will,—for I doubted.—till at

last
My deed gave way beneath me sud-

denly, And left me what I am. The curtain

dropped,
My part quite ended, all the foot-

lights quenched,
My own soul hissing at me through
the dark,

I, ready for confession,—I was wrong, I've sorely failed; I've slipped the ends of life,

I yield; you have conquered."

"Stay," I answered him;
"I've something for your hearing,
also. I

Have failed too."

"You!" he said, "you're very great;

The sadness of your greatness fits you well:

As if the plume upon a hero's casque Should nod a shadow upon his victor face."

I took him up austerely,—"You have read

My book, but not my heart; for recollect,

'Tis writ in Sanscrit, which you bungle at.

I've surely failed, I know: if failure We could laugh there, too! Why,

To look back sadly on work gladly done.-

To wander on my mountains of Delight,

So called (I can remember a friend's words

As well as you, sir), weary and in want Of even a sheep-path, thinking bitterly . . .

Well, well! no matter. I but say so much.

To keep you, Romney Leigh, from saying more,

And let you feel I am not so high indeed,

That I can bear to have you at my foot,-

Or safe, that I can help you. That Like that Aurora Leigh's." Tune-day,

Too deeply sunk in craterous sunsets

For you or me to dig it up alive;

To pluck it out all bleeding with spent flame

At the roots, before those moralising

We have got instead,—that poor lost day, you said

Some words as truthful as the thing of mine

You care to keep in memory: and I hold

If I, that day, and, being the girl I

Had shown a gentler spirit, less arro-

It had not hurt me. Ah, you'll not mistake

The point here. I but only think, you see,

More justly, that's more humbly, of myself.

Than when I tried a crown on and supposed . . . Nay, laugh, sir,-I'll laugh with you!

-pray you, laugh. I've had so many birthdays since that

I've learnt to prize mirth's oppor-

tunities. Which come too seldom. Was it you who said

I was not changed? the same Aurora? Look here, sir: I was right upon the Ah,

Ulysses' dog

Knew him, and wagged his tail and died : but if

I had owned a dog, I too, before my Troy,

And, if you brought him here, . . . I warrant you

He'd look into my face, bark lustily, And live on stoutly, as the creatures will

Whose spirits are not troubled by long loves.

A dog would never know me. I'm so changed:

Much less a friend . . . except that you're misled

By the colour of the hair, the trick of the voice.

"Sweet trick of voice! I would be a dog for this, to know it at last,

And die upon the falls of it. O love, O best Aurora! are you then so sad, You scarcely had been sadder as my wife?"

"Your wife, sir! I must certainly be changed.

If I, Aurora, can have said a thing So light, it catches at the knightly spurs

Of a noble gentleman like Romney Leigh,

And trips him from his honourable sense

Of what befits" "You wholly misconceive,"

He answered.

I returned,—" I'm glad of it; But keep from misconception, too, vourself:

I am not humbled to so low a point, Nor so far saddened. If I am sad at

Ten layers of birthdays on a woman's

Are apt to fossilise her girlish mirth, Though ne'er so merry: I'm perforce more wise,

And that, in truth, means sadder. For the rest.

whole,

That birthday morning. 'Tis impossible

To get at men excepting through their souls.

However open their carnivorous iaws:

And poets get directlier at the soul, Than any of our economists:-for

which. You must not overlook the poet's

work When scheming for the world's neces-

The soul's the way. Not even Christ

Himself Can save a man else than as He holds man's soul:

And therefore did He come into our flesh.

As some wise hunter creeping on his knees

With a torch, into the blackness of some cave,

To face and quell the beast there,take the soul,

And so possess the whole man, body and soul.

I said, so far, right, yes; not farther. though:

We both were wrong that June-day, -both as wrong

As an east wind had been. I who talked of art.

And you who grieved for all men's griefs . . . what then ?

We surely make too small a part for God In these things. What we are, im-

ports us more Than what we eat; and life, you've

granted me, Develops from within. But innermost

Of the inmost, most interior of the God claims His own, Divine humanity

Renewing nature, -or the piercingest verse

Prest in by subtlest poet, still must

As much upon the outside of a man. As the very bowl, in which he dips his beard.

-And then . . . the rest. I cannot surely speak.

Perhaps I doubt more than you But this last book o'ercame me like doubted then,

If I, the poet's veritable charge, Have borne upon my forehead. If I have,

It might feel somewhat liker to a crown.

The foolish green one even.-Ah, I think.

And chiefly when the sun shines, that I've failed.

But what then, Romney? Though we fail indeed.

You . . . I . . . a score of such weak workers He

Fails never. If He cannot work by us. He will work over us. Does He want a man.

Much less a woman, think you? Every The star winks there, so many souls

are born, Who all shall work too. Let our

own be calm . We should be ashamed to sit beneath those stars,

Impatient that we're nothing."

"Could we sit Just so for ever, sweetest friend," he

"My failure would seem better than success.

And yet, indeed, your book has dealt with me More gently, cousin, than you ever

will! The book brought down entire the

bright June-day, And set me wandering in the garden-

walks, And let me watch the garland in a

place, You blushed so . . . nay, forgive

me; do not stir: I only thank the book for what it

taught, And what, permitted. Poet, doubt yourself;

But never doubt that you're a poet to me

From henceforth. Ah, you've written poems, sweet.

Which moved me in secret, as the sap is moved

In still March-branches, signless as a stone:

soft rain

Which falls at midnight, when the So obstinately, that we'll break our tightened bark

Breaks out into unhesitating buds. And sudden protestations of the

spring. In all your other books, I saw but

A man may see the moon so, in a

And not be nearer therefore to the moon. Nor use the sight . . . except to

drown himself: And so I forced my heart back from

the sight: For what had I, I thought, to do

with her,-Aurora . . . Romney? But, in this

last book. You showed me something separate

from yourself,

Beyond you; and I bore to take it in, And let it draw me. You have shown me truths.

O June-day friend, that help me now at night.

When June is over! truths not yours, indeed,

But set within my reach by means of

Presented by your voice and verse the

To take them clearest. Verily I was wrong;

And verily, many thinkers of this age. Av. many Christian teachers, half in heaven.

Are wrong in just my sense, who understood

Our natural world too insularly, as if No spiritual counterpart completed it Consummating its meaning, rounding

To justice and perfection, line by line, Form by form, nothing single, nor alone.—

The great below clenched by the great above;

Shade here authenticating substance | Or where's the resurrection?" there;

The body proving spirit, as the effect The cause: we, meantime, being too grossly apt

To hold the natural, as dogs a bone (Though reason and nature beat us in the face);

teeth

Or ever we let go. For everywhere We're too materialistic,—eating clay (Like men of the west) instead of Adam's corn

And Noah's wine; clay by handfuls. clay by lumps.

Until we're filled up to the throat with clav.

And grow the grimy colour of the ground

On which we are feeding. Ay, materialist

The age's name is. God Himself. with some.

Is apprehended as the bare result

Of what His hand materially has

Expressed in such an algebraic sign, Called God :- that is, to put it otherwise.

They add up nature to a naught of

And cross the quotient. There are many, even,

Whose names are written in the Christian church

To no dishonour,—diet still on mud, And splash the altars with it. You might think

The clay, Christ laid upon their eyelids when, Still blind. He called them to the use

of sight. Remained there to retard its exercise

With clogging incrustations. Close to heaven,

They see, for mysteries, through the open doors.

Vague puffs of smoke from pots of earthenware:

And fain would enter, when their time shall come.

With quite a different body than St. Paul

Has promised,—husk and chaff, the whole barley-corn,

"Thus it is."

I sighed. And he resumed with mournful face.

"Beginning so, and filling up with

The wards of this great key, the natural world,

And fumbling vainly therefore at the For keeping summits by annulling lock

Of the spiritual,—we feel ourselves shut in

With all the wild-beast roar of struggling life,

The terrors and compunctions of our souls, As saints with lions,—we who are not

saints. And have no heavenly lordship in our

To awe them backward! Ay, we are

forced, so pent, To judge the whole too partially, . . .

confound Conclusions. Is there any common

phrase Significant, when the adverb's heard

alone, The verb being absent, and the pro-

noun out ?

But we, distracted in the roar of life, Still insolently at God's adverb snatch.

And bruit against Him that His thought is void,

His meaning hopeless; -cry, that everywhere

The government is slipping from His hand.

Unless some other Christ . . . say Romney Leigh . .

Come up, and toil and moil, and change the world,

For which the First has proved inadequate,

However we talk bigly of His work And piously of His person. We blaspheme

At last, to finish that doxology, Despairing on the earth for which He

died." "So now," I asked, "you have more

hope of men?"

"I hope," he answered: "I am come to think That God will have His work done, as

you said, And that we need not be disturbed too

much For Romney Leigh or others having

With this or that quack nostrum, recipes

failed

depths.

For learning wrestling with long lounging sleeves,

And perfect heroism without a scratch. We fail,—what, then? Aurora, if I smiled

To see you, in your lovely morningpride, Try on the poet's wreath which suits

the noon,-(Sweet cousin, walls must get the

weather-stain Before they grow the ivy!) certainly

I stood myself there worthier of contempt,

Self-rated, in disastrous arrogance, As competent to sorrow for mankind And even their odds. A man may well despair,

Who counts himself so needful to success.

I failed. I throw the remedy back on God.

And sit down here beside you, in good hope."

"And yet, take heed," I answered, " lest we lean

Too dangerously on the other side, And so fail twice. Be sure, no earnest work

Of any honest creature, howbeit weak. Imperfect, ill-adapted, fails so much, It is not gathered as a grain of sand

To enlarge the sum of human action used

For carrying out God's end. No creature works

So ill, observe, that therefore he's cashiered.

The honest earnest man must stand and work:

The woman also; otherwise she drops At once below the dignity of man,

Accepting serfdom. Free men freely work:

Whoever fears God, fears to sit at ease."

He cried, "True. After Adam, work was curse :

The natural creature labours, sweats and frets.

But, after Christ, work turns to privilege;

And henceforth one with our humanity,

The Six-day Worker, working still in us,

Has called us freely to work on with Him

In high companionship. So, happiest!

I count that Heaven itself is only work

To a surer issue. Let us work, indeed.—

But, no more, work as Adam . . . nor as Leigh

Erewhile, as if the only man on earth, Responsible for all the thistles blown And tigers couchant,—struggling in amaze

Against disease and winter,—snarling

For ever, that the world's not paradise.

Oh cousin, let us be content, in work, To do the thing we can, and not presume

To fret because it's little. 'Twill em-

Seven men, they say, to make a perfect pin:

Who makes the head, content to miss the point.—

Who makes the point, agreed to leave the join:

And if a man should cry, 'I want a pin,

And I must make it straightway, head and point.'—

His wisdom is not worth the pin he wants.

Seven men to a pin,—and not a man too much!

Seven generations, haply, to this world,

To right it visibly, a finger's breadth, And mend its rents a little. Oh, to storm

And say,—'This world here is intolerable:

I will not eat this corn, nor drink this wine.

Nor love this woman, flinging her my soul

Without a bond for't, as a lover should,

Nor use the generous leave of happiness,

As not too good for using generously '-

(Since virtue kindles at the touch of joy,

Like a man's cheek laid on a woman's hand;

And God, Who knows it, looks for quick returns

From joys) !—to stand and claim to have a life

Beyond the bounds of the individual man.

And raze all personal cloisters of the soul

To build up public stores and magazines,

As if God's creatures otherwise were lost,

The builder surely saved by any means!

To think,—I have a pattern on my nail,

And I will carve the world new after it,

And solve so, these hard social ques-

tions—nay, Impossible social questions,—since

their roots
Strike deep in Evil's own existence

Which God permits because the question's hard

To abolish evil nor attaint free-will. Ay, hard to God, but not to Romney Leigh!

For Romney has a pattern on his nail (Whatever may be lacking on the Mount),

And not being over nice to separate What's element from what's convention, hastes

By line on line, to draw you out a world,

Without your help indeed, unless you take

His yoke upon you and will learn of him,—

So much he has to teach! so good a world!

The same, the whole creation's groaning for!

No rich nor poor, no gain nor loss nor stint,

No pottage in it able to exclude

A brother's birthright, and no right of birth,

The pottage,—both secured to every man;

And perfect virtue dealt out like the rest,

Gratuitously, with the soup at six, To whose does not seek it."

"Softly, sir,"
I interrupted,—"I had a cousin once
I held in reverence. If he strained
too wide,

It was not to take honour, but give help;

The gesture was heroic. If his hand

Accomplished nothing . . . (well, it is not proved)

That empty hand thrown impotently out

Were sooner caught, I think, by One in heaven,

Than many a hand that reaped a harvest in

And keeps the scythe's glow on it

And keeps the scythe's glow on it. Pray you, then,

For my sake merely, use less bitterness

In speaking of my cousin."

"Ah," he said,
"Aurora! when the prophet beats
the ass,

The angel intercedes." He shook his head—

"And yet to mean so well, and fail so foul,

Expresses ne'er another beast than man;

The antithesis is human. Hearken, dear:

There's too much abstract willing, purposing,

In this poor world. We talk by aggregates,

And think by systems; and, being used to face

Our evils in statistics, are inclined To cap them with unreal remedies Drawn out in haste on the other side the slate."

"That's true," I answered, fain to throw up thought.

And make a game of't; "Oh, we generalise

Enough to please you. If we pray at all,
We pray no longer for our daily bread,

But next centenary's harvests. If we give,

Our cup of water is not tendered till We lay down pipes and found a Company

With Branches. Ass or angel, 'tis the same:

A woman cannot do the thing she ought,

Which means whatever perfect thing she can,

In life, in art, in science, but she fears To let the perfect action take her part

And rest there: she must prove what she can do

Before she does it,—prate of woman's rights,

Of woman's mission, woman's function, till

The men (who are prating, too, on their side) cry,

'A woman's function plainly is . . . to talk.'

Poor souls, they are very reasonably vexed!

They cannot hear each other speak."
"And you,
An artist, judge so?"

"I. an artist,—yes, Because, precisely, I'm an artist, sir, And woman,—if another sate in sight, I'd whisper,—Soft, my sister! not a word!

By speaking we prove only we can speak;

Which he, the man here, never doubted. What

He doubts, is whether he can do the thing

With decent grace, we've not yet done at all:

Now, do it; bring your statue,—you have room!

He'll see it even by the starlight here; And if 'tis e'er so little like the god Who looks out from the marble silently

Along the track of his own shining dart

Through the dusk of ages,—there's no need to speak:

The universe shall henceforth speak for you,

And witness, 'She who did this thing, was born

To do it,—claims her license in her And coldly chooses empire, where as work.

-And so with more works. Whose He might republic. Genuine governcures the plague,

Though twice a woman, shall be Is but the expression of a nation, good called a leech:

Who rights a land's finances, is ex-

For touching coppers, though her hands be white .-

But we, we talk!"

" It is the age's mood," He said; "we boast, and do not. We put up

Hostelry signs where'er we lodge a Each separate figure? Whom do day,

Some red colossal cow, with mighty

Then bring out presently our saucer-

Of curds. We want more quiet in our works,

More knowledge of the bounds in which we work :

More knowledge that each individual Remains an Adam to the general

Constrained to see, like Adam, that

he keep His personal state's condition hon-

estly, Or vain all thoughts of his to help the

world. Which still must be developed from

its one. If bettered in its many. We, indeed,

Who think to lay it out new like a

We take a work on us which is not man's: *

For God alone sits far enough above, To speculate so largely. None of us (Not Romney Leigh) is mad enough to say.

'We'll have a grove of oaks upon that

And sink the need of acorns'. Government.

If veritable and lawful, is not given By imposition of the foreign hand,— Nor chosen from a pretty pattern-

Of some domestic idealogue, who sits

well

ment

Or less good,—even as all society,

Howe'er unequal, monstrous, crazed, and cursed,

Is but the expression of men's single lives. The loud sum of the silent units.

What!

We'd change the aggregate and vet retain

we cheat by that?

Now, not even Romney."

" Cousin, you are sad. A Cyclops' fingers could not strain to Did all your social labour at Leigh Hall

> And elsewhere, come to nought then?"

" It was nought," He answered mildly. "There is room indeed,

For statues still, in this large world of God's.

But not for vacuums,—so I am not sad:

Not sadder than is good for what I am. My vain phalanstery dissolved itself; My men and women of disordered

lives. I brought in orderly to dine and sleep. Broke up those waxen masks I made them wear,

With fierce contortions of the natural

And cursed me for my tyrannous constraint

In forcing crooked creatures to live straight;

And set the country hounds upon my

To bite and tear me for my wicked deed

Of trying to do good without the church

Or even the squires, Aurora. Do you mind

Your ancient neighbours? The great book-club teems

With 'sketches,' 'summaries,' and .
'last tracts" but twelve,

On Socialistic troublers of close bonds

Betwixt the generous rich and grateful poor.

The vicar preached from 'Revelation' (till

The doctor woke) and found me with 'The Frogs'

On three successive Sundays; ay, and stopped

To weep a little (for he's getting old) That such perdition should o'ertake a

Of such fair acres,—in the parish, too! He printed his discourses 'by request;'

And if your book shall sell as his did, then

Your verses are less good than I suppose,

The women of the neighbourhood subscribed.

And sent me a copy bound in scarlet silk.

Tooled edges, blazoned with the arms of Leigh:

I own that touched me."

"What, the pretty ones? Poor Romney!"

"Otherwise the effect was small.
I had my windows broken once or

twice
By Liberal peasants, naturally incensed

At such a vexer of Arcadian peace, Who would not let men call their

wives their own
To kick like Britons,—and made ob-

stacles When things went smoothly as a baby

drugged,
Toward freedom and starvation;

bringing down
The wicked London tavern-thieves

and drabs, To affront the blessed hillside drabs

and thieves With mended morals, quotha,—fine

new lives!—

My windows paid for't. I was shot

at, once,
By an active poacher who had hit a

From the other barrel, tired of springeing game

So long upon my acres, undisturbed, And restless for the country's virtue, (yet He missed me)—ay, and pelted very oft In riding through the village. 'There

he goes,

Tho'd drive away our Christian

Who'd drive away our Christian gentlefolks,

To catch us undefended in the trap
He baits with poisonous cheese, and
lock us up

In that pernicious prison of Leigh Hall

With all his murderers! Give another name,

And say Leigh Hell, and burn it up with fire.

And so they did, at last, Aurora."
"Did?"

"You never heard it, cousin? Vincent's news

Came stinted, then."

"They did? they burnt Leigh Hall?"

"You're sorry, dear Aurora? Yes, indeed,

They did it perfectly: a thorough work,

And not a failure, this time. Let us grant
'Tis somewhat easier, though, to

burn a house
Than build a system:—yet that's

easy, too,
In a dream. Books, pictures,—av.

the pictures! what,
You think your dear Vandykes would

give them pause?
Our proud ancestral Leighs with

those peaked beards,
Or bosoms white as foam thrown up

Or bosoms white as foam thrown up on rocks

From the old-spent wave. Such calm defiant looks.

They flared up with! now, nevermore they'll twit

The bones in the family-vault with ugly death.

Not one was rescued, save the Lady Maud,

Who threw you down, that morning you were born,

The undeniable lineal mouth and chin,

To wear for ever for her gracious sake; For which good deed I saved her: the rest went; And you, you're sorry, cousin. Well, for me,

With all my phalansterians safely out (Poor hearts, they helped the burners, it was said,

And certainly a few clapped hands and yelled),

The ruin did not hurt me as it might,— As when for instance I was hurt one

A certain letter being destroyed. In To see the great house flare so . . .

oaken floors,

Our fathers made so fine with rushes

Before our mothers furbished them with trains,—

Carved wainscots, panelled walls, the favourite slide For draining off a martyr (or a

rogue), The echoing galleries, half a half-mile

and all the various stairs that took you up

And took you down, and took you round about

Upon their slippery darkness, recol-

All helping to keep up one blazing iest;

The flames through all the casements pushing forth,

Like red-hot devils crinkled into snakes.

All signifying,—' Look you, Romney Leigh.

We save the people from your saving, here,

Yet so as by fire! we make a pretty

Besides,—and that's the best you've ever done.'

—To see this, almost moved myself to clap!

The 'vale et plaude' came, too, with effect,

When in the roof fell, and the fire, that paused,

Stunned momently beneath the stroke of slates

And tumbling rafters, rose at once and roared,

(which disappeared

In a mounting whirlwind of dilated flame),

Blew upward, straight, its drift of fiery chaff

In the face of Heaven . . . which blanched, and ran up higher."

" Poor Romney!"

"Sometimes when I dream," he said,

"I hear the silence after; 'twas so still. For all those wild beasts, yelling, cursing round,

Were suddenly silent, while you counted five!

So silent, that you heard a young bird fall

From the top-nest in the neighbouring rookery

Through edging over-rashly toward the light.

The old rooks had already fled too far. To hear the screech they fled with, though you saw

Some flying on still, like scatterings of dead leaves

In autumn-gusts, seen dark against the sky:

All flying,—ousted, like the House of Leigh."

" Dear Romney!"

" Evidently 'twould have been A fine sight for a poet, sweet, like

To make the verse blaze after. I mv-

Even I, felt something in the grand old trees.

Which stood that moment like brute Druid gods

Amazed upon the rim of ruin, where, As into a blackened socket, the great

Had dropped,—still throwing up splinters now and then,

To show them grey with all their centuries.

Left there to witness that on such a day

The house went out."

" Ah!

"While you counted five I seemed to feel a little like a Leigh,-And wrapping the whole house But then it passed, Aurora. A child cried:

And I had enough to think of what to | To breathe: "I think you were ill

With all those houseless wretches in the dark.

And ponder where they'd dance the next time, they

Who had burnt the viol."

" Did you think of that? Who burns his viol will not dance, I know.

To cymbals, Romney."

"O my sweet sad voice," He cried,—"O voice that speaks and overcomes!

The sun is silent, but Aurora speaks."

" Alas," I said; " I speak I know not what:

I'm back in childhood, thinking as a

A foolish fancy-will it make you smile?

I shall not from the window of my

Catch sight of those old chimneys any more."

" No more," he answered. " If you pushed one day

Through all the green hills to our fathers' house,

You'd come upon a great charred circle where

The patient earth was singed an acre round:

With one stone-stair, symbolic of my

Ascending, winding, leading up to nought!

'Tis worth a poet's seeing. Will you _ go ? "

I made no answer. Had I any right To weep with this man, that I dared to speak?

A woman stood between his soul and

And waved us off from touching evermore

With those unclean white hands of hers. Enough.

We had burnt our viols and were

So. The silence lengthened till it pressed. | I spoke,

afterward."

" More ill," he answered, " had been scarcely ill.

I hoped this feeble fumbling at life's knot

Might end concisely,—but I failed to

As formerly I failed to live,—and thus Grew willing, having tried all other ways,

To try just God's. Humility's so good, When pride's impossible. Mark us,

how we make Our virtues, cousin, from our worn-

out sins. Which smack of them from hence-

forth. Is it right, For instance, to wed here, while you

love there? And yet because a man sins once, the

sin Cleaves to him, in necessity to sin:

That if he sin not so, to damn himself.

He sins so, to damn others with himself:

And thus, to wed here, loving there, becomes

A duty. Virtue buds a dubious leaf Round mortal brows; your ivy's better, dear.

-Yet she, 'tis certain, is my very wife;

The very lamb left mangled by the wolves

Through my own bad shepherding: and could I choose

But take her on my shoulder past this stretch

Of rough, uneasy wilderness, poor lamb, Poor child, poor child?—Aurora, my

belov'd, I will not vex you any more to-night:

But, having spoken what I came to say,

The rest shall please you. What she can, in me,-

Protection, tender liking, freedom.

She shall have surely, liberally, for her And hers, Aurora. Small amends they'll make

For hideous evils (which she had not To join his grandeur of ideal known

Except by me) and for this imminent | As if his mallet struck me from my loss.

This forfeit presence of a gracious friend.

Which also she must forfeit for my sake.

Since . . . drop your hand in mine a moment, sweet,

We're parting!——Ah, my snowdrop, what a touch.

As if the wind had swept it off! you grudge

Your gelid sweetness on my palm but

A moment? angry, that I could not

You . . . speaking, breathing, living, side by side

With someone called my wife . . . Howbeit since then, I've writ a book and live, myself?

Nav. be not cruel-you must under- I'm somewhat dull still in the manly stand!

being uncrossed

with me.

And so, henceforth, I put the shutters

Auroras must not come to spoil my dark."

He smiled so feebly, with an empty hand

Stretched sideway from me, -as indeed he looked

To anyone but me to give him help,— And, while the moon came suddenly out full.

The double-rose of our Italian moons,

Sufficient, plainly, for the heaven and

(The stars, struck dumb and washed away in dews

Of golden glory, and the mountains steeped

In divine languor), he, the man, appeared So pale and patient, like the marble

A sculptor puts his personal sadness | And not allow for puckerings in the

thought.-

height

Of passionate indignation, I who had risen

Pale,—doubting, paused, . . . Was Romney mad indeed?

Had all this wrong of heart made sick the brain?

Then quiet, with a sort of tremulous pride.

"Go, cousin," I said coldly, "a farewell

Was sooner spoken 'twixt a pair of friends

In those old days, than seems to suit vou now:

or two.

art Your lightest footfall on a floor of Of phrase and metaphrase. Why,

any man Would shake the house, my lintel Can carve a score of white Loves out of snow.

'Gainst angels: henceforth it is night As Buonarotti down in Florence there.

> And set them on the wall in some safe shade.

> As safe, sir, as your marriage! very good :

> Though if a woman took one from the ledge

> To put it on the table by her flowers. And let it mind her of a certain friend.

> 'Twould drop at once (so better), would not bear

> Her nail-mark even, where she took it

A little tenderly; so best, I say:

For me, I would not touch so light a thing,

And risk to spoil it half an hour before

The sun shall shine to melt it: leave it there.

I'm plain at speech, direct in purpose: when

I speak, you'll take the meaning as it

silks

By clever stitches. I'm a woman, sir.

And use the woman's figures natur-

As you, the male license. So, I wish you well.

I'm simply sorry for the griefs you've

And not for your sake only, but mankind's.

This race is never grateful: from the

One fills their cup at supper with pure wine.

Which back they give at cross-time on a sponge,

In bitter vinegar."

"If gratefuller." He murmured,—" by so much less pitiable!

God's self would never have come down to die,

Could man have thanked Him for it." " Happily "Tis patent that, whatever," I re-

sumed. "You suffered from this thanklessness

of men, You sink no more than Moses' bul-

rush-boat. When once relieved of Moses; for

vou're light. You're light, my cousin! which is

well for you, And manly. For myself,—now mark

me, sir, They burnt Leigh Hall; but if, consummated

To devils, heightened beyond Luci-

They had burnt instead a star or two. of those

We saw above there just a moment | She is not used to hold my gown so

Before the moon abolished them.destroyed

And riddled them in ashes through a

On the head of the foundering universe,—what then?

If you and I remained still you and I, It would not shift our places as mere

Nor render decent you should toss a phrase

Beyond the point of actual feeling !-You shall not interrupt me: as you

We're parting. Certainly, not once

or twice, To-night you've mocked me some-

what, or yourself; And I, at least, have not deserved it so

That I should meet it unsurprised. But now,

Enough: we're parting . . . parting. Cousin Leigh, I wish you well through all the acts of

And life's relations, wedlock, not the

least: And it shall 'please me,' in your

words, to know You yield your wife, protection, free-

dom, ease, And very tender liking. May you live

So happy with her, Romney, that your friends

May praise her for it. Meantime. some of us

Are wholly dull in keeping ignorant Of what she has suffered by you, and what debt

Of sorrow your rich love sits down to

But if 'tis sweet for love to pay its debt,

'Tis sweeter still for love to give its gift; And you, be liberal in the sweeter

way,-You can, I think. At least, as

touches me,

You owe her, cousin Romney, no amends:

You need entreat her now to let it go: The lady never was a friend of mine, Nor capable,—I thought you knew as much,-

Of losing for your sake so poor a prize As such a worthless friendship. Be content.

Good cousin, therefore, both for her and you!

I'll never spoil your dark, nor dull your noon,

Nor vex you when you're merry, nor Through arrogance of when you rest:

You shall not need to put a shutter up To keep out this Aurora. Ah, your north

Can make Auroras which vex nobody,

Scarce known from evenings ! also, let me say,

My larks fly higher than some windows. Right:

You've read your Leighs. Indeed 'twould shake a house

If such as I came in with outstretched hand.

Still warm and thrilling from the My aggrandisement: there's no room clasp of one . . .

Of one we know . . . to acknowledge, palm to palm,

As mistress there . . . the Lady Waldemar."

" Now God be with us" . . . with a sudden clash

voice he interrupted—" what name's that?

You spoke a name, Aurora."

" Pardon me; I would that, Romney, I could name your wife

Nor wound you, yet be worthy." " Are we mad?"

He echoed—" wife! mine! Lady Waldemar!

I think you said my wife." He sprang to his feet.

And threw his noble head back toward the moon

As one who swims against a stormy And laughed with such a helpless,

hopeless scorn,

I stood and trembled.

"May God judge me so," He said at last,-" I came convicted here.

And humbled sorely if not enough. I

Because this woman from her crystal

Had shown me something which a man calls light:

Because too, formerly, I sinned by

As, then and ever since, I have, by God,

nature.though I loved . . .

Whom best, I need not say . . . since that is writ

Too plainly in the book of my misdeeds;

And thus I came here to abase myself, And fasten, kneeling, on her regent brows

A garland which I startled thence one day

Of her beautiful June-youth. But here again

I'm baffled !-fail in my abasement

left for me.

At any woman's foot, who misconceives

My nature, purpose, possible actions. What!

Are you the Aurora who made large my dreams To frame your greatness? you con-

ceive so small? You stand so less than woman,

through being more, And lose your natural instinct, like a

beast. Through intellectual culture? since

indeed I do not think that any common she Would dare adopt such fancy-for-

geries For the legible life-signature of such As I, with all my blots: with all my blots !

At last then, peerless cousin, we are peers-

At last we're even. Ah, you've left your height;

And here upon my level we take hands

And here I reach you to forgive you,

And that's a fall, Aurora. Long ago You seldom understood me,-but, before.

I could not blame you. Then, you only seemed

So high above, you could not see below:

But now I breathe.—but now I pardon !-nay,

We're parting. Dearest, men have burnt my house,

Maligned my motives, -but not one, I | I would not do . . . not for my life swear,

Has wronged my soul as this Aurora has.

Who called the Lady Waldemar my wife."

"Not married to her! yet you said"...

" Again? Nay, read the lines" (he held a letter out)

"She sent you through me."

By the moonlight there, I tore the meaning out with passionate haste

Much rather than I read it.

NINTH BOOK

Even thus. I pause to write it out at length,

The letter of the Lady Waldemar .-

"I prayed your cousin Leigh to take you this,

He says he'll do it. After years of Or what is called 50,—when a woman

And fools upon one string of a man's

name, And fingers it for ever till it breaks,-

He may perhaps do for her such a

And she accept it without detriment Although she should not love him any more.

And I, who do not love him, nor love

Nor you, Aurora,—choose you shall repent

Your most ungracious letter, and con-

Constrained by his convictions (he's convinced).

You've wronged me foully. Are you made so ill.

You woman—to impute such ill to me?

We both had mothers,—lay in their bosom once.

Why, after all, I thank you, Aurora Leigh.

things

. . . nor him . . . Though something I have somewhat

overdone,— For instance, when I went to see the

gods

One morning on Olympus, with a

That shook the thunder from a certain cloud, Committing myself vilely. Could I

think, The Muse I pulled my beart out from

my breast

To soften, had herself a sort of heart. And loved my mortal? He, at least. loved her;

I heard him say so; 'twas my recompense,

When, watching at his bedside fourteen days,

He broke out ever like a flame at whiles Between the heats of fever . . . 'Is

it thou? Breathe closer, sweetest mouth!'

and when at last The fever gone, the wasted face ex-

tinct As if it irked him much to know me

there, He said, 'Twas kind, 'twas good. 'twas womanly'

(And fifty praises to excuse one love), 'But was the picture safe he had ventured for?'

And then, half wandering . . . 'I have loved her well.

Although she could not love me.'-'Say instead,'

I answered, 'that she loves you.'— 'Twas my turn

To rave (I would have married him so changed,

Although the world had jeered me properly

For taking up with Cupid at his worst.

The silver quiver worn off on his hair). 'No, no,' he murmured, 'no, she loves me not:

Aurora Leigh does better: bring her book

And read it softly, Lady Waldemar, For proving to myself that there are Until I thank your friendship more for that.

Than even for harder service.' So I I told him, as I tell you now, Miss read

Your book, Aurora, for an hour, that dav: I kept its pauses, marked its emphasis:

My voice, empaled upon rhyme's golden hooks.

Not once would writhe, nor quiver, nor revolt:

I read on calmly,—calmly shut it up, Observing, 'There's some merit in the book.

And yet the merit in't is thrown away

As chances still with women, if we write

Or write not: we want string to tie our flowers,

So drop them as we walk, which serves to show

The way we went. Good morning, Mister Leigh:

You'll find another reader the next

A woman who does better than to love.

I hate; she will do nothing very well: *

Male poets are preferable, tiring less And teaching more.' I triumphed o'er you both,

And left him.

"When I saw him afterward, I had read your shameful letter, and my heart.

He came with health recovered, strong though pale,

Lord Howe and he, a courteous pair of friends.

To say what men dare say to women, when

Their debtors. But I stopped them with a word:

And proved I had never trodden such a road,

To carry so much dirt upon my shoe. Then, putting into it something of disdain.

I asked for sooth his pardon, and my

For having done no better than to

And that, not wisely,—though 'twas

long ago, And though 'twas altered perfectly since then.

Leigh, And proved I took some trouble for

his sake

(Because I knew he did not love the girl)

To spoil my hands with working in the stream

Of that poor bubbling nature,—till she went.

Consigned to one I trusted, my own maid.

Who once had lived full five months in my house

(Dressed hair superbly), with a lavish

To carry to Australia where she had left. A husband, said she. If the creature

lied. The mission failed, we all do fail and

More or less-and I'm sorry-which

is all Expected from us when we fail the

most. And go to church to own it. What I meant.

Was just the best for him, and me, and her . .

Best even for Marian !—I am sorry for't. And very sorry. Yet my creature

She saw her stop to speak in Oxford

Street To one . . . no matter! I had

sooner cut My hand off (though 'twere kissed the hour before.

And promised a pearl troth-ring for the next)

Than crush her silly head with so much wrong.

Poor child! I would have mended it with gold,

Until it gleamed like St. Sophia's dome

When all the faithful troop to morning prayer:

But he, he nipped the bud of such a thought

With that cold Leigh look which I fancied once

And broke in, 'Henceforth she was called his wife.

His wife required no succour: he Though insolent your letter and was bound

To Florence, to resume this broken bond:

Enough so. Both were happy, he and Howe.

To acquit me of the heaviest charge of all-

At which I shot my tongue against my fly

And struck him; 'Would he carry.he was just,-

A letter from me to Aurora Leigh, And ratify from his authentic mouth

My answer to her accusation?'-

If such a letter were prepared in time.

-He's just, your cousin, -ay, abhorrently.

He'd wash his hands in blood, to keep them clean.

And so, cold, courteous, a mere gentleman,

He bowed, we parted.

" Parted. Face no more, Voice no more, love no more! wiped wholly out

Like some ill scholar's scrawl from heart and slate.-

Ay, spit on and so wiped out utterly By some coarse scholar! I have been too coarse.

Too human. Have we business, in our rank.

With blood i' the veins? I will have henceforth none:

Not even to keep the colour at my lip. A rose is pink and pretty without blood;

Why not a woman? When we've played in vain

The game, to adore,—we have resources still.

And can play on at leisure, being adored:

Here's Smith already swearing at my That I'm the typic She. Away with

Smith!-Smith smacks of Leigh,—and, hence-

forth, I'll admit No Socialist within three crinolines.

To live and have his being. But For which three things I hate, hate, for you,

absurd. And though I hate you frankly,-

take my Smith!

For when you have seen this famous marriage tied, A most unspotted Erle to a noble

Leigh (His love astray on one he should not

love). Howbeit you should not want his

love, beware, You'll want some comfort. So I leave you Smith ;

Take Smith !-he talks Leigh's subjects, somewhat worse;

Adopts a thought of Leigh's, and dwindles it: Goes leagues beyond, to be no inch

behind; Will mind you of him, as a shoe-

string may, Of a man: and women, when they are made like you,

Grow tender to a shoe-string, footprint even.

Adore averted shoulders in a glass, And memories of what, present once, was loathed.

And yet, you loathed not Romney, though you've played At 'fox and goose' about him with

your soul: Pass over fox, you rub out fox,-

ignore A feeling, you eradicate it,—the act's Identical.

"I wish you joy, Miss Leigh. You've made a happy marriage for your friend;

And all the honour, well-assorted love.

Derives from you who love him, whom he loves!

You need not wish me joy to think of I have so much. Observe, Aurora

Leigh: Your droop of eyelid is the same as

And, but for you, I might have won his love,

And, to you, I have shown my naked heart,-

hate you. Hush,

Suppose a fourth !- I cannot choose Have made her, for your honourable but think

That, with him, I were virtuouser than you

Without him: so I hate you from this gulf

And hollow of my soul, which opens

To what, except for you, had been my heaven,

And is instead, a place to curse by! LOVE."

An active kind of curse. I stood She never raised her eyes, nor took a there cursed-

Confounded. I had seized and caught the sense

Of the letter with its twenty stinging snakes.

In a moment's sweep of eyesight, and I stood

Dazed.—" Ah !—not married."

"You mistake," he said ; "I'm married. Is not Marian Erle my wife?

As God sees things, I have a wife and child;

And I, as I'm a man who honours God,

Am here to claim them as my child and wife."

I felt it hard to breathe, much less to speak.

Nor word of mine was needed. Some one else

Was there for answering. "Romney," she began,

"My great good angel, Romney." Then at first,

I knew that Marian Erle was beautiful. She stood there, still and pallid as a

saint. Dilated, like a saint in ecstasy.

As if the floating moonshine inter-

Betwixt her foot and the earth, and raised her up

To float upon it. "I had left my child,

Who sleeps," she said, "and, having drawn this way,

I heard you speaking, . . . friend !-Confirm me now.

men

wife?"

The thrilling, solemn, proud, pathetic voice.

He stretched his arms out toward the thrilling voice,

As if to draw it on to his embrace. -" I take her as God made her, and as men

Must fail to unmake her, for my honoured wife,"

But stood there in her place, and spoke again.

-"You take this Marian's child, which is her shame

In sight of men and women, for your child.

Of whom you will not ever feel ashamed?"

The thrilling, tender, proud, pathetic

He stepped on toward it, still with outstretched arms,

As if to quench upon his breast that voice.

—" May God so father me, as I do him.

And so forsake me as I let him feel He's orphaned haply. Here I take the child

To share my cup, to slumber on my knee.

To play his loudest gambol at my foot,

To hold my finger in the public ways. Till none shall need inquire, 'Whose child is this?"

The gesture saving so tenderly, 'My own.' "

She stood a moment silent in her place;

Then, turning toward me, very slow and cold-

-" And you, -what say you? will you blame me much,

If, careful for that outcast child of mine,

I catch this hand that's stretched to me and him.

You take this Marian, such as wicked Nor dare to leave him friendless in the world

514 Where men have stoned me? Have And not as Marian. I not the right Else found so wholly bare? Or is it wrong To let your cousin, for a generous bent, Put out his ungloved fingers among briars To set a tumbling bird's-nest somewhat straight? You will not tell him, though we're innocent We are not harmless? . . . and that both our harms Will stick to his good smooth noble life like burrs, the cloak? You've been my friend: you will not

Never to drop off though you shake For this: do you be strong to know

now be his?

You've known him, that he's worthy of a friend;

And you're his cousin, lady, after all, And therefore more than free to take

his part, Explaining, since the nest is surely

spoilt, And Marian what you know her,-

though a wife, The world would hardly understand

her case Of being just hurt and honest; while

for him, 'Twould ever twit him with his bastard child

And married harlot. Speak, while yet there's time:

You would not stand and let a good man's dog

Turn round and rend him, because his, and reared

Of a generous breed,—and will you let his act,

Because it's generous? Speak. I'm bound to you,

And I'll be bound by only you, in this."

The thrilling, solemn voice, so passionless.

Sustained, vet low, without a rise or fall, As one who had authority to speak,

I looked up to feel To take so mere an aftermath from If God stood near me, and beheld His heaven

As blue as Aaron's priestly robe

appeared To Aaron when he took it off to die. And then I spoke-" Accept the gift. I say,

My sister Marian, and be satisfied.

The hand that gives has still a soul behind

Which will not let it quail for having given.

Though foolish worldlings talk they know not what, Of what they know not. Romney's

strong enough

he's strong: He stands on Right's side; never

flinch for him, As if he stood on the other. You'll be bound

By me? I am a woman of repute: No fly-blow gossip ever specked my

life; My name is clean and open as this

hand, Whose glove there's not a man dares

blab about, As if he had touched it freely:—

here's my hand To clasp your hand, my Marian,

owned as pure! As pure,—as I'm a woman and a Leigh!-

And, as I'm both, I'll witness to the world

That Romney Leigh is honoured in his choice,

Who chooses Marian for his honoured wife."

Her broad wild woodland eyes shot out a light;

Her smile was wonderful for rapture. "Thanks,

My great Aurora." Forward then she sprang,

And dropping her impassioned spaniel head

With all its brown abandonment of curls

On Romney's feet, we heard the kisses drawn

Through sobs upon the foot, upon the ground-

"O Romney! O my angel! O unchanged,

Though, since we've parted, I have past the grave !

But Death itself could only better

Not change thee !- Thee I do not

thank at all: I but thank God Who made thee what

thou art. So wholly Godlike."

When he tried in vain To raise her to his embrace, escaping thence

As any leaping fawn from a huntsman's grasp,

She bounded off and 'lighted beyond reach.

Before him, with a staglike majesty Of soft, serene defiance, -as she

He could not touch her, so was toler-

He had cared to try. She stood there with her great

Drowned eyes, and dripping cheeks, and strange sweet smile

That lived through all, as if one held a light

Across a waste of waters, -shook her head

To keep some thoughts down deeper in her soul,-

Then, white and tranquil as a summer-

Which, having rained itself to a tardy peace.

Stands still in heaven as if it ruled the day, Spoke out again-" Although, my

generous friend. Since last we met and parted, you're

unchanged. And, having promised faith to Marian

Erle. Maintain it, as she were not changed

at all: And though that's worthy, though

that's full of balm To any conscious spirit of a girl

Who once has loved you as I loved you once,-

Yet still it will not make her . . . if Than many a happier woman. Very she's dead.

And gone away where none can give or take

In marriage,—able to revive, return And wed you,—will it, Romney? Here's the point;

O friend, we'll see it plainer: you

and I Must never, never never join hands

Nav. let me sav it.—for I said it first

To God, and placed it, rounded to an oath.

Far, far above the moon there, at His feet.

As surely as I wept just now at vours,-

We never, never, never join hands so. And now, be patient with me; do not think

I'm speaking from a false humility. The truth is, I am grown so proud with grief,

And He has said so often through His nights

And through His mornings, 'Weep a little still.

Thou foolish Marian, because women must.

But do not blush at all except for sin,'-

That I, who felt myself unworthy once

Of virtuous Romney and his highborn race,

Have come to learn . . . a woman, poor or rich.

Despised or honoured, is a human soul: And what her soul is,—that, she is

herself.

Although she should be spit upon of

As is the pavement of the churches here.

Still good enough to pray in. And, being chaste

And honest, and inclined to do the right.

And love the truth, and live my life out green

And smooth beneath his steps, I should not fear

To make him, thus, a less uneasy time

proud

trap

voice . .

Both yours and yours. It is so good To give you love . . . still less. I to know

'Twas really God Who said the same before: For thus it is in heaven, that first

God speaks.

And then His angels. Oh, it does me good.

It wipes me clean and sweet from devil's dirt.

That Romney Leigh should think me worthy still

Of being his true and honourable wife! Henceforth I need not say, on leaving | Or did I worship? judge, Aurora earth.

I had no glory in it. For the rest, The reason's ready (master, angel, friend.

Be patient with me) wherefore you and I

Can never, never, never join hands so. I know you'll not be angry like a man

(For you are none) when I shall tell the truth,-

Which is, I do not love you, Romney Leigh. I do not love you. Ah well! catch

my hands. Miss Leigh, and burn into my eyes

with yours.-I swear I do not love him. Did I

once? 'Tis said that women have been

bruised to death. And yet, if once they loved, that love

of theirs Could never be drained out with all

their blood: I've heard such things and pondered. Did I indeed

Love once? or did I only worship?

Yes. Perhaps, O friend, I set you up so

high Above all actual good or hope of good, Or fear of evil, all that could be mine.

I haply set you above love itself, And out of reach of these poor woman's

Angelic Romney. What was in my thought?

You see me. Pardon, that I set a To be your slave, your help, your toy, your tool.

To hear a confirmation in your To be your love . . . I never thought of that.

> gave you love? I think I did not give you anything:

I was but only yours, -upon my knees.

All yours, in soul and body, in head and heart,-A creature you had taken from the

ground, Still crumbling through your fingers to your feet

To join the dust she came from. Did I love.

Leigh!

But if indeed I loved, 'twas long ago,-So long! before the sun and moon were made,

Before the hells were open, -ah, before I heard my child cry in the desert

night.

And knew he had no father. It may be.

I'm not as strong as other women are, Who, torn and crushed, are not undone from love.

It may be, I am colder than the dead, Who, being dead, love always. for me

Once killed . . . this ghost of Marian loves no more,

No more . . . except the child! . . . no more at all.

I told your cousin, sir, that I was dead: And now, she thinks I'll get up from

my grave, And wear my chin-cloth for a wed-

ding-veil, And glide along the churchyard like a

bride, While all the dead keep whispering

through the withes, 'You would be better in your place

with us. You pitiful corruption!' At the

thought, The damps break out on me like

leprosy, Although I'm clean. Ay, clean as Marian Erle:

As Marian Leigh, I know, I were not I've room for no more children in my clean:

I have not so much life that I should love. . Except the child. Ah God! I

could not bear

To see my darling on a good man's knees.

And know by such a look, or such a

Or such a silence, that he thought sometimes.

'This child was fathered by some cursed wretch' . . .

For. Romney, -angels are less tender-

Than God and mothers: even you would think

What we think never. He is ours, the child:

And we would sooner vex a soul in heaven

By coupling with it the dead body's thought.

It left behind it in a last month's grave,

Than, in my child, see other than . . . my child.

We only, never call him fatherless Who has God and his mother. O my

babe.

My pretty, pretty blossom, an ill-

Once blew upon my breast! can any think I'd have another, -one called hap-

A fathered child, with father's love

and race That's worn as bold and open as a

To vex my darling when he's asked his name

What! a And has no answer? happier child

Than mine, my best,-who laughed so loud to-night

He could not sleep for pastime? Nay, I swear

By life and love, that, if I lived like some.

And loved like . . . some . . . ay, loved you. Romney Leigh,

As some love (eyes that have wept so much see clear),

arms;

My kisses are all melted on one mouth: I would not push my darling to a

To dandle babies. Here's a hand. shall keep

For ever clean without a marriage

To tend my boy, until he cease to need One steadying finger of it, and desert (Not miss) his mother's lap, to sit with

And when I miss him (not he me) I'll

And say, 'Now give me some of Romney's work,

To help your outcast orphans of the world.

And comfort grief with grief.' For you, meantime,

Most noble Romney, wed a noble

And open on each other your great souls,-

I need not farther bless you. If I dared

But strain and touch her in her upper sphere,

And say, 'Come down to Romneypay my debt!' I should be joyful with the stream of

jov Sent through me. But the moon is

in my face . . I dare not,—though I guess the name he loves:

I'm learned with my studies of old days.

Remembering how he crushed his under-lip

When some one came and spoke, or did not come: Aurora, I could touch her with my

hand. And fly, because I dare not."

She was gone, He smiled so sternly that I spoke in haste.

"Forgive her-she sees clearly foherself:

Her instinct's holv."

"I forgive?" he said, "I only marvel how she sees so sure, While others "... there he paused. —then hoarse, abrupt,—

"Aurora! you forgive us, her and me? For her, the thing she sees, poor loyal child,

If once corrected by the thing I know, Had been unspoken; since she loves you well,

Has leave to love you:—while for me, alas,

If once or twice I let my heart escape This night . . . remember, where hearts slip and fall

They break beside: we're parting, parting,—ah,

You do not love, that you should surely know

What that word means. Forgive, be tolerant:

It had not been, but that I felt myself 'So safe in impuissance and despair,

I could not hurt you though I tossed my arms

And sighed my soul out. The most utter wretch

Will choose his postures when he comes to die,

However in the presence of a queen; And you'll forgive me some unseemly spasms

Which meant no more than dying. Do you think

I had ever come here in my perfect mind.

Unless I had come here, in my settled mind,

Bound Marian's, bound to keep the bond, and give

My name, my house, my hand, the things I could,

To Marian? For even I could give as much:

Even I, affronting her exalted soul By a supposition that she wanted

these, Could act the husband's coat and hat

set up To creak i' the wind and drive the

world-crows off

From pecking in her garden. Straw can fill A hole to keep out vermin. Now.

at last, I own heaven's angels round her life

suffice To fight the rats of our society.

Without this Romney: I can see it at | And now I know He held you in His last;

And here is ended my pretension which

The most pretended. Over-proud of course,

Even so !-but not so stupid . . . blind . . . that I,

Whom thus the great Taskmaster of the world

Has set to meditate mistaken work, My dreary face against a dim blank

Throughout man's natural lifetime. -could pretend .

Or wish . . . O love, I have loved vou! O my soul,

I have lost you !—but I swear by all yourself, And all you might have been to me

these years, If that June-morning had not failed

my hope,— I'm not so bestial, to regret that day This night,—this night, which still to

you is fair; Nay, not so blind, Aurora. I attest Those stars above us, which I cannot see . . ."

"You cannot"...

"That if Heaven itself should

Remix the lots, and give me another chance,

I'd say, 'No other!'—I'd record my blank. Aurora never should be wife of mine."

" Not see the stars?"

"'Tis worse still, not to see To find your hand, although we're parting, dear.

A moment let me hold it, ere we part: And understand my last wordsthese, at last!

I would not have you thinking, when I'm gone,

That Romney dared to hanker for your love,

In thought or vision, if attainable (Which certainly for me it never

was), And wish to use it for a dog to-day, To help the blind man stumbling,

God forbid!

palm.

And kept you open-eyed to all my faults. To save you at last from such a dreary

Believe me, dear, that if I had known. like Him.

What loss was coming on me, I had

As well in this as He has.—Farewell. you,

Who are still my light,—farewell! How late it is:

I know that, now: you've been too patient, sweet.

I will but blow my whistle toward the lane.

And some one comes . . . the same who brought me here.

Get in-Good-night."

"A moment. Heavenly Christ! A moment. Speak once, Romney. 'Tis not true.

I hold your hands, I look into your face-

You see me?"

"No more than the blessed stars." Be blessed too, Aurora. Ah, my sweet.

You tremble. Tender-hearted! Do you mind

Of yore, dear, how you used to cheat I, too, at first desponded. To be old John,

And let the mice out slily from his Turned out of nature, mulcted as a traps.

Until he marvelled at the soul in mice

Which took the cheese and left the snare? The same

Dear soft heart always! 'Twas for this, I grieved Howe's letter never reached you. Ah,

vod had heard Of illness,—not the issue . . . not

the extent: My life long sick with tossings up and

down: The sudden revulsion in the blazing house,—

The strain and struggle both of body and soul,

Which left fire running in my veins, for blood:

Scarce lacked that thunderbolt of the falling beam.

Which nicked me on the forehead as But, weep for me, Aurora? Yes, I passed

The gallery-door with a burden. Sav heaven's bolt.

Not William Erle's: not Marian's father's: tramp

And poacher, whom I found for what he was.

And, eager for her sake to rescue him. Forth swept from the open highway of the world.

Road-dust and all,—till, like a woodland boar

Most naturally unwilling to be tamed.

He notched me with his tooth. But not a word

To Marian! and I do not think, besides.

He turned the tilting of the beam my way,-

And if he laughed, as many swear, poor wretch.

Nor he nor I supposed the hurt so deep.

We'll hope his next laugh may be merrier.

In a better cause."

"Blind, Romney?" "Ah, my friend,

You'll learn to say it in a cheerful voice.

blind.

Refused the daily largesse of the sun To humble creatures! When the fever's heat

Dropped from me, as the flame did from my house,

And left me ruined like it, stripped of

The hues and shapes of aspectable life.

A mere bare blind stone in the blaze of day,

A man, upon the outside of the earth. As dark as ten feet under, in the grave,-

Why that seemed hard." "No hope?"

A tear! you weep, Divine Aurora? tears upon my hand! I've seen you weeping for a mouse, a bird,—

there's hope.

Not hope of sight, —I could be learned, But weeping bitterly . . . (the pride dear,

And tell you in what Greek and Latin Until the heart breaks under it) . . . name

The visual nerve is withered to the I love you, Romney"....

ferent,

there's hope.

throned sense. Sees, waits in patience, till the walls Farewell, Aurora."

break up

have dropt: There's hope. The man here, once

so arrogant And restless, so ambitious, for his part,

Of dealing with statistically packed Disorders (from a pattern on his She will not surely blame him. As nail),

And packing such things quite another way,-

Is now contented. From his personal

He has come to hope for others when they lose,

And wear a gladder faith in what we gain . . .

Through bitter experience, compensation sweet.

Like that tear, sweetest. I am quiet now,-

As tender surely for the suffering world,

But quiet,—sitting at the wall to learn.

Content, henceforth, to do the thing I

stone.

A stone can still give shelter to a

And it is worth while being a stone for that:

There's hope, Aurora."

"Is there hope for me? For me?—and is there room beneath the stone

For such a worm ?-And if I came | Forsooth, but God's,-and I would and said . . .

What all this weeping scarce will let me sav.

And yet what women cannot say at | As He and I were equals, -you, beall.

keeps up,

I love,—

"Silence!" he exclaimed. Though the outer eyes appear indif- "A woman's pity sometimes makes her mad.

Unspotted in their crystals. But A man's distraction must not cheat his soul

The spirit, from behind this de- To take advantage of it. Yet, 'tis hard—

"But I love you, sir:

From which the bas-relief and fresco And when a woman says she loves a man.

The man must hear her, though he love her not.

Which . . . hush! . . . he has leave to answer in his turn;

for me.

You call it pity, -think I'm gener. ous 🌬

'Twere somewhat easier, for a woman proud

As I am, and I'm very vilely proud. To let it pass as such, and press on

Love born of pity,—seeing that excellent loves

Are born so, often, nor the quicklier die.-

And this would set me higher by the head

Than now I stand. No matter: let the truth

Stand high; Aurora must be humble: no,

My love's not pity merely. Obviously For, though as powerless, said I, as a I'm not a generous woman, never was,

Or else, of old, I had not looked so near

To weights and measures, grudging you the power

To give, as first I scorned your power to judge

For me, Aurora: I would have no gifts

use them, too,

According to my pleasure and my choice.

low.

Excluded from that level of interchange

Admitting benefaction. You were wrong

In much? you said so. I was wrong in most.

Oh. most! You only thought to rescue men

By half-means, half-way, seeing half their wants,

While thinking nothing of your personal gain.

But I who saw the human nature I am changed since then, changed

At both sides, comprehending, too, the soul's,

And all the high necessities of Art. Betrayed the thing I saw, and wronged my own life

For which I pleaded. Passioned to exalt

The artist's instinct in me at the cost Of putting down the woman's, -I for-

No perfect artist is developed here From any imperfect woman. Flower from root.

And spiritual from natural, grade by grade

In all our life. A handful of the earth

To make God's image! the despised poor earth,

The healthy odorous earth, -I missed, with it,

The divine Breath that blows the nostrils out

To ineffable inflatus: ay, the breath Which love is. Art is much, but love is more.

O Art, my Art, thou'rt much, but Love is more!

Art symbolises heaven, but Love is God

And makes heaven. I, Aurora, fell from mine:

I would not be a woman like the rest. A simple woman who believes in love, And owns the right of love because she loves.

And, hearing she's beloved, is satisfied

With what contents God: I must | analyse.

Confront, and question; just as if a And know I cannot win a look of fly

Refused to warm itself in any sun Till such was in leone: I must fret

Forsooth, because the month was only May:

Be faithless of the kind of proffered

And captious, lest it miss my dig-

And scornful, that my lover sought a

To use . . . to use! O Romney, O

wholly,—for indeed, If now you'd stoop so low to take my

love. And use it roughly, without stint or

spare, As men use common things with

more behind (And, in this, ever would be more

behind).

To any mean and ordinary end,-The joy would set me like a star in heaven,

So high up, I should shine because of height

And not of virtue. Yet in one respect, Just one, beloved, I am in no wise

changed: I love you, loved you . . . loved you

first and last, And love you on for ever, Now I

know I loved you always, Romney. She who died

Knew that, and said so ; Lady Walde-

Knows that; . . . and Marian: I had known the same

Except that I was prouder than I knew.

And not so honest. Ay, and, as I live,

I should have died so, crushing in my hand

This rose of love, the wasp inside and all.—

Ignoring ever to my soul and you

Both rose and pain,—except for this great loss.

This great despair,—to stand before your face

yours.

You think, perhaps, I am not But what he said . . . I have writchanged from pride,

words.

Because you cannot shame me with That such a passionate rain would your eyes?

O calm, grand eyes, extinguished in a And dash this last page? What he

Blown out like lights o'er melancholy I fain would write it down here like seas.

Though shrieked for by the shipwrecked .- O my Dark.

My Cloud,—to go before me every

While I go ever toward the wilderness.-

I would that you could see me bare to the soul !-

If this be pity, 'tis so for myself.

And not for Romney: he can stand alone:

A man like him is never overcome: No woman like me, counts him piti-

While saints applaud him. He mistook the world:

But I mistook my own heart,—and that slip

Was fatal. Romney,-will you leave me here?

So wrong, so proud, so weak, so unconsoled.

So mere a woman!—and I love you

I love you, Romney."

Could I see his face. I wept so? Did I drop against his breast.

Or did his arms constrain me? Were my cheeks

Hot, overflooded, with my tears, or

And which of our two large explosive hearts

So shook me? That, I know not. There were words

That broke in utterance . . . melted, in the fire:

Embrace, that was convulsion, . . . then a kiss . . .

As long and silent as the ecstatic night.-

And deep, deep, shuddering breaths, which meant beyond

Whatever could be told by word or kiss.

ten day by day.

And that I chiefly bear to say such With somewhat even writing. Did I think

intercept

said, indeed,

the rest.

To keep it in my eyes, as in my ears, The heart's sweet scripture, to be read at night

When weary, or at morning when afraid.

And lean my heaviest oath on when I

That, when all's done, all tried, all counted here,

All great arts, and all good philosophies.-

This love just puts its hand out in a dream.

And straight outreaches all things. What he said.

I fain would write. But if an angel spoke

In thunder, should we, haply, know much more

Than that it thundered? If a cloud came down

And wrapt us wholly, could we draw its shape. As if on the outside, and not over-

_come ? And so he spake. His breath against

my face Confused his words, yet made them

more intense,-As when the sudden finger of the wind

Will wipe a row of single city-lamps To a pure white line of flame, more

luminous Because of obliteration: more in-

tense,-The intimate presence carrying in itself

Complete communication, as with

souls Who, having put the body off, per-

Through simply being. Thus, 'twas granted me

To know he loved me to the depth and height

Of such large natures, ever competent With grand horizons by the land or sea,

love's grand sunrise. Small spheres hold small fires:

But he loved largely, as a man can

Who, baffled in his love, dares live his

Accept the ends which God loves, for his own,

And lift a constant aspect.

From the day I had brought to England my poor searching face

(An orphan even of my father's grave), He had loved me, watched me, watched his soul in mine,

Which in me grew and heightened into love.

For he, a boy still, had been told the

Of how a fairy bride from Italy, With smells of oleanders in her hair, Was coming through the vines to touch his hand:

Whereat the blood of boyhood on the

Made sudden heats. And when at | last I came,

And lived before him, lived, and rarely smiled.

He smiled and loved me for the thing I was,

As every child will love the year's first flower

(Not certainly the fairest of the year, But, in which, the complete year seems to blow),

The poor sad snowdrop,—growing between drifts. Mysterious medium 'twixt the plant

and frost, So faint with winter while so quick with spring,

So doubtful if to thaw itself away With that snow near it. Not that

Romney Leigh Had loved me coldly. If I thought so once,

It was as if I had held my hand in fire And shook for cold. But now I understood

For ever, that the very fire and heat him clear,

And shaped to dubious order, word and act:

That, just because he loved me over all.

All wealth, all lands, all social privi-

To which chance made him unexpected heir,-

And, just because on all these lesser gifts. Constrained by conscience and the

sense of wrong He had stamped with steady hand

God's arrow-mark Of dedication to the human need,

He thought it should be so too, with his love:

He, passionately loving, would bring down

His love, his life, his best (because the best).

His bride of dreams, who walked so still and high

Through flowery poems as through meadow-grass.

The dust of golden lilies on her feet, That she should walk beside him on the rocks

In all that clang and hewing out of men, And help the work of help which was

his life, And prove he kept back nothing,-

not his soul. And when I failed him,—for I failed

him, I— And when it seemed he had missed

my love,-he thought, "Aurora makes room for a workingnoon:'

And so, self-girded with torn strips of hope,

Took up his life, as if it were for death

(Just capable of one heroic aim),

And threw it in the thickest of the world.-

At which men laughed as if he had drowned a dog:

No wonder,—since Aurora failed him first 1

The morning and the evening made his day.

Of troubling passion in him, burned But oh, the night! oh, bitter-sweet! oh, sweet!

O dark, O moon and stars, O ecstasy Of darkness! O great mystery of love .--

In which absorbed, loss, anguish, treason's self

Enlarges rapture,—as a pebble dropt In some full wine-cup, over-brims the wine!

While we two sate together, leaned that night

So close, my very garments crept and And men who work, can only work thrilled

With strange electric life; and both my cheeks

Grew red, then pale, with touches from my hair

In which his breath was; while the golden moon

Was hung before our faces as the badge

Of some sublime inherited despair, Since ever to be seen by only one,— A voice said, low and rapid as a sigh,

Yet breaking, I felt conscious, from a smile.-

"Thank God, who made me blind, to make me see!

Shine on, Aurora, dearest light of souls.

Which rul'st for evermore both day and night! I am happy.'

I flung closer to his breast.

As sword that, after battle, flings to sheath

And, in that hurtle of united souls. The mystic motions which in common moods

on us.

And, as we sate, we felt the old earth spin,

worlds

Swing round us in their audient circles, till

If that same golden moon were over-

Or if beneath our feet, we did not And Comte is dwarfed, -and Cabet, know.

And then calm, equal, smooth with No perfect manners, without Chrisweights of joy,

His voice rose, as some chief musician's song

Amid the old Jewish temple's Selahpause.

And bade me mark how we two met at last

Upon this moon-bathed promontory of earth.

To give up much on each side, then take all.

"Beloved," it sang, "we must be here to work:

for men,

And, not to work in vain, must comprehend

Humanity, and, so, work humanly, And raise men's bodies still by raising souls.

As God did, first."

But stand upon the earth," I said. "to raise them,—(this is human too:

There's nothing high which has not first been low;

My humbleness, said One, has made me great!)

As God did, last."

" And work all silently. And simply," he returned, "as God does all:

Distort our nature never, for our work.

Nor count our right hands stronger for being hoofs.

The man most man, with tenderest human hands,

Works best for men,—as God in Nazareth."

Are shut beyond our sense, broke in He paused upon the word, and then resumed:

> "Fewer programmes; we who have no prescience.

And all the starry turbulence of Fewer systems; we who are held and do not hold.

Less mapping out of masses, to be saved.

By nations or by sexes. Fourier's void,

puerile.

Subsist no rules of life outside of life; tian souls:

The Christ Himself had been no Lawgiver,

Unless He had given the life, too, Since I was too ambitious in my deed, with the law.

I echoed thoughtfully-"The man, Till God came on me, marked the most man.

Works best for men: and, if most 'Ill-doer, henceforth keep within man indeed.

He gets his manhood plainest from Attempting less than others,'-and I his soul:

itself

Obeys our old rules of development; Come thou, my compensation, my The Spirit ever witnessing in ours,

And Love, the soul of soul, within the soul.

Evolving it sublimely. First, God's love."

wedded souls.

Which still presents that mysterv's counterpart.

Sweet shadow-rose, upon the water of

Of such a mystic substance, Sharon gave

A name to! human, vital, fructuous rose.

Whose calvx holds the multitude of leaves,-

Loves filial, loves fraternal, neighbour-loves,

And civic . . . all fair petals, all good scents.

All reddened, sweetened from one central Heart!"

" Alas," I cried, " it was not long ago, You swore this very social rose smelt ill."

" Alas," he answered, " is it a rose at

The filial's thankless, the fraternal's hard.

The rest is lost. I do but stand and think.

Across dim waters of a troubled life The Flower of Heaven so vainly overhangs,—

What perfect counterpart would be in sight.

If tanks were clearer. Let us clean | the tubes.

And wait for rains. O poet, O my love,

And thought to distance all men in success.

place, and said,

this line.

stand

While, obviously, this stringent soul And work among Christ's little ones, content,-

dear sight.

My morning-star, my morning! rise and shine,

And touch my hills with radiance not their own .

Shine out for two, Aurora, and fulfil "And next," he smiled, "the love of My falling-short that must be! work for two.

As I, though thus restrained, for two, shall love!

Gaze on, with inscient vision toward the sun,

And, from his visceral heat, pluck out the roots

Of light beyond him. Art's a service, -mark:

A silver key is given to thy clasp, And thou shalt stand unwearied, night and day,

And fix it in the hard, slow-turning wards.

And open, so, that intermediate door Betwixt the different planes of sensuous form

And form insensuous, that inferior men

May learn to feel on still through these to those,

And bless thy ministration. The world waits

For help. Beloved, let us love so well.

Our work shall still be better for our love,

And still our love be sweeter for our work,

And both, commended, for the sake of each,

By all true workers and true lovers born.

Now press the clarion on thy woman's lip

(Love's holy kiss shall still keep consecrate)

And breathe the fine keen breath Excluding falsehood. He shall make along the brass.

And blow all class-walls level as Jericho's

Past Jordan: crying from the top of souls.

To souls, that they assemble on earth's flats

To get them to some purer eminence Than any hitherto beheld for clouds! What height we know not,—but the way we know,

And how by mounting ave, we must attain,

And so climb on. It is the hour for souls:

That bodies, leavened by the will and

Be lightened to redemption. The world's old;

But the old world waits the hour to be renewed:

Toward which, new hearts in individual growth

Must quicken, and increase to multitude

In new dynasties of the race of men,— Developed whence, shall grow spontaneously

New churches, new economies, new

Admitting freedom, new societies

all new."

My Romney!—Lifting up my hand in his.

As wheeled by Seeing spirits toward the east,

He turned instinctively,—where, faint and far.

Along the tingling desert of the sky, Beyond the circle of the conscious

hills. Were laid in jasper-stone as clear as

The first foundations of that new, near Day

Which should be builded out of heaven, to God.

He stood a moment with erected brows,

In silence, as a creature might, who gazed:

Stood calm, and fed his blind, majestic

Upon the thought of perfect noon. And when

I saw his soul saw,-" Jasper first," I

" And second, sapphire; third, chalcedony;

The rest in order, . . . last, an amethyst."

POEMS BEFORE CONGRESS

1860

PREFACE

These poems were written under the pressure of the events they indicate, after a residence in Italy of so many years, that the present triumph of great principles is heightened to the writer's feelings by the disastrous issue of the last movement, witnessed from "Casa Guidi Windows" in 1849. Yet, if the verses should appear to English readers too pungently rendered to admit of a patri-

and my admiration of their heroic constancy and union. What I have written has simply been written because I love truth and justice quand même,—" more than Plato" Plato's country, more than Dante and Dante's country, more even than Shakespeare and Shakespeare's country.

And if patriotism means the flattery of one's nation in every case. then the patriot, take it as you please, otic respect to the English sense of is merely a courtier; which I am things, I will not excuse myself on not, though I have written "Naposuch grounds, nor on the ground of leon III in Italy." It is time to my attachment to the Italian people, limit the significance of certain terms,

or to enlarge the significance of certain things. Nationality is excellent in its place; and the instinct of self-love is the root of a man, which will develop into sacrificial virtues. But all the virtues are means and uses; and, if we hinder their tendency to growth and expansion, we both destroy them as virtues, and degrade them to that rankest species of corruption reserved for the most noble organisations. For instance, -non-intervention in the affairs of neighbouring states is a high political virtue; but non-intervention does not mean, passing by on the other side when your neighbour falls among thieves,—or Phariseeism would recoverit from Christianity. Freedom itself is virtue, as well as privilege; but freedom of the seas does not mean piracy, nor freedom of the land, brigandage; nor freedom of the senate, freedom to cudgel a dissident member, nor freedom of the press, freedom to calumniate and lie. So. if patriotism be a virtue indeed, it cannot mean an exclusive devotion to one's country's interests, -- for that is only another form of devotion to personal interests, family interests, or provincial interests, all of which, if not driven past themselves, are vulgar and immoral objects. Let us put away the Little Peddlingtonism unworthy of a great nation, and too prevalent among us. If the man who does not look beyond this natural life is of a somewhat narrow order, what must be the man who does not look beyond his own frontier or his own sea?

I confess that I dream of the day when an English statesman shall arise with a heart too large for England, having courage in the face of his countrymen to assert of some suggested policy,—"This is good for your trade: this is necessary for your domination; but it will vex a people hard by; it will hurt a people farther off; it will profit nothing to the general humanity: therefore, away with it!—it is not for you or for me." When a British minister dares speak so, and when a British

public applauds him speaking, then shall the nation be so glorious, that her praise, instead of exploding from within, from loud civic mouths, shall come to her from without, as all worthy praise must, from the alliances she has fostered and from the populations she has saved.

And poets who write of the events of that time, shall not need to justify themselves in prefaces, for ever so little jarring of the national sentiment, imputable to their rhymes.

ROME, February, 1860.

NAPOLEON III IN ITALY

EMPEROR, Emperor!
From the centre to the shore,
From the Seine back to the Rhine,
Stood eight millions up and swore
By their manhood's right divine

So to elect and legislate,
This man should renew the line
Broken in a strain of fate
And leagued kings at Waterloo,
When the people's hands let go.

Emperor Evermore.

With a universal shout
They took the old regalia out
From an open grave that day;
From a grave that would not close,
Where the first Napoleon lay
Expectant, in repose,

As still as Merlin, with his conquering face

Turned up in its unquenchable appeal

To men and heroes of the advancing race,—

Prepared to set the seal Of what has been on what shall be.

> Emperor Evermore.

> > III

The thinkers stood aside
To let the nation act,
Some hated the new-constituted

Of empire, as pride treading on their pride.

Some quailed, lest what was poisonous in the past Should graft itself in that Druidic bough

On this green now.

Some cursed, because at last
The open heavens to which they had
looked in vain

For many a golden fall of marvellous rain

Were closed in brass; and some Wept on because a gone thing could not come;

And some were silent, doubting all things for

That popular conviction,—evermore Emperor.

That day I did not hate
Nor doubt, nor quail nor curse.
I, reverencing the people, did not bate
My reverence of their deed and oracle,

Nor vainly prate
Of better and of worse

Against the great conclusion of their will.

And yet, O voice and verse, Which God set in me to acclaim and sing

Conviction, exaltation, aspiration, We gave no music to the patent thing, Nor spared a holy rhythm to throb and swim

About the name of him Translated to the sphere of domination

By democratic passion!
I was not used, at least,
Nor can be, now or then,
To stroke the ermine beast
On any kind of throne

(Though builded by a nation for its own),

And swell the surging choir for kings of men—

"Emperor Evermore."

But now, Napoleon, now
That, leaving far behind the purple
throng
Of vulgar monarchs, thou
Tread'st higher in thy deed
Than stair of throne can lead,
To help in the hour of wrong
The broken hearts of nations to be
strong,—

Now, lifted as thou art To the level of pure song,

We stand to meet thee on these Alpine snows!

And while the palpitating peaks break out

Ecstatic from somnambular repose With answers to the presence and the shout,

We, poets of the people, who take

With elemental justice, natural right,

Join in our echoes also, nor refrain. We meet thee, O Napoleon, at this height

At last, and find thee great enough to praise.

Receive the poet's chrism, which smells beyond

The priest's, and pass thy ways;—
An English poet warns thee to maintain

God's word, not England's :—let His truth be true

And all men liars! with His truth respond

To all men's lie. Exalt the sword and smite

On that long anvil of the Apennine Where Austria forged the Italian chain in view

Of seven consenting nations, sparks of fine

Admonitory light,

Till men's eyes wink before convictions new.

Flash in God's justice to the world's amaze,

Sublime Deliverer!—after many days
Found worthy of the deed thou art
come to do—

Emperor Evermore.

But Italy, my Italy, Can it last, this gleam? Can she live and be strong,

Or is it another dream

Like the rest we have dreamed so long?

And shall it, must it be,
That after the battle-cloud has
broken

She will die off again Like the rain. Or like a poet's song Sung of her, sad at the end Because her name is Italy,-Die and count no friend? Is it true,—may it be spoken,— That she who has lain so still. With a wound in her breast. And a flower in her hand, And a grave-stone under her head. While every nation at will Beside her has dared to stand And flout her with pity and scorn, Saving "She is at rest, She is fair, she is dead, And, leaving room in her stead To Us who are later born, This is certainly best!" Saying "Alas, she is fair. Very fair, but dead, And so we have room for the race." -Can it be true, be true. That she lives anew? That she rises up at the shout of her sons,

At the trumpet of France, And lives anew ?-is it true That she has not moved in a trance. As in Forty-eight?

When her eyes were troubled with

Till she knew not friend from foe, Till her hand was caught in a strait Of her cerement and baffled so From doing the deed she would; And her weak foot stumbled across The grave of a king, And down she dropt at heavy loss,

And we gloomily covered her face and said.

"We have dreamed the thing; She is not alive, but dead.'

VII

Now, shall we say Our Italy lives indeed? And if it were not for the beat and bray Of drum and trump of martial men, Should we feel the underground heave and strain, Where heroes left their dust as a

Sure to emerge one day?

march B.P.

Of France and Piedmont's double hosts.

Should we hear the ghosts Thrill through ruined aisle and arch, Throb along the frescoed wall, Whisper an oath by that divine They left in picture, book, and stone. That Italy is not dead at all? Ay, if it were not for the tears in our eves.

These tears of a sudden passionate joy, Should we see her arise From the place where the wicked are

overthrown,

Italy, Italy? loosed at length From the tyrant's thrall, Pale and calm in her strength? Pale as the silver cross of Savoy When the hand that bears the flag is

And not a breath is stirring, save What is blown Over the war-trump's lip of brass, Ere Garibaldi forces the pass!

Av. it is so, even so. Ay, and it shall be so. Each broken stone that long ago She flung behind her as she went In discouragement and bewilderment Through the cairns of Time, and missed her way

Between to-day and yesterday, Up springs a living man. And each man stands with his face in the light

Of his own drawn sword, Ready to do what a hero can. Wall to sap, or river to ford, Cannon to front, or foe to pursue, Still ready to do, and sworn to be

As a man and a patriot can. Piedmontese, Neapolitan, Lombard, Tuscan, Romagnole, Each man's body having a soul,— Count how many they stand, All of them sons of the land, Every live man there Allied to a dead man below. And the deadest with blood to

And if it were not for the rhythmic To quicken a living hand In case it should ever be slow. Count how many they come To the beat of Piedmont's drum, With faces keener and grayer Than swords of the Austrian slayer, All set against the foe.

"Emperor Evermore."

TX

Out of the dust, where they ground them,

Out of the holes, where they dogged them,

Out of the hulks, where they wound them

In iron, tortured and flogged them; Out of the streets, where they chased them,

Taxed them and then bayonetted

Out of the homes, where they spied on them

(Using their daughters and wives), Out of the church, where they fretted them.

Rotted their souls and debased them, Trained them to answer with knives, Then cursed them all at their prayers!—

Out of cold lands, not theirs, Where they exiled them, starved

them, lied on them; Back they come like a wind, in vain Cramped up in the hills, that roars its road

The stronger into the open plain; Or like a fire that burns the hotter And longer for the crust of cinder, Serving better the ends of the potter; Or like a restrained word of God, Fulfilling itself by what seems to hinder.

"Emperor Evermore."

400

Shout for France and Savoy!
Shout for the helper and doer,
Shout for the good sword's ring,
Shout for the thought still truer.
Shout for the spirits at large
Who passed for the dead this spring,
Whose living glory is sure.
Shout for France and Savoy!
Shout for the council and charge!
Shout for the head of Cavour;

And shout for the heart of a King That's great with a nation's joy. Shout for France and Savoy!

XI

Take up the child, Macmahon, though

Thy hand be red From Magenta's dead,

And riding on, in front of the troop,

In the dust of the whirlwind of war

Through the gate of the city of Milan, stoop

And take up the child to thy saddlebow.

Nor fear the touch as soft as a flower Of his smile as clear as a star! Thou hast a right to the child, we say,

Thou hast a right to the child, we say, Since the women are weeping for joy as those

Who, by thy help and from this day, Shall be happy mothers indeed. They are raining flowers from terrace

and roof: Take up the flower in the child.

While the shout goes up of a nation freed

And heroically self-reconciled, Till the snow on that peaked Alp aloof Starts, as feeling God's finger anew, And all those cold white marble fires Of mounting saints on the Duomo spires

Flicker against the Blue.
"Emperor
Evermore."

ХII

Ay, it is He.

Who rides at the King's right hand! Leave room to his horse and draw to the side,

Nor press too near in the ecstasy Of a newly delivered impassioned land:

He is moved, you see, He who has done it all. They call it a cold stern face;

But this is Italy
Who rises up to her place!—
For this he fought in his youth,
Of this he dreamed in the past;
The lines of the resolute mouth
Tremble a little at last.
Cry, he has done it all!

"Emperor Evermore,"

It is not strange that he did it, Though the deed may seem to strain To the wonderful, unpermitted, For such as lead and reign. But he is strange, this man: The people's instinct found him (A wind in the dark that ran Through a chink where was no door), And elected him and crowned him Emperor Evermore.

Autocrat? let them scoff. Who fail to comprehend That a ruler incarnate of The people, must transcend All common king-born kings. These subterranean springs A sudden outlet winning, Have special virtues to spend. The people's blood runs through him, Dilates from head to foot, Creates him absolute, And from this great beginning Evokes a greater end To justify and renew him-

> Emperor Evermore.

What! did any maintain

That God or the people (think!) Could make a marvel in vain ?-Out of the water-iar there. Draw wine that none could drink? Is this a man like the rest. This miracle, made unaware By a rapture of popular air, And caught to the place that was You think he could barter and cheat As vulgar diplomates use, With the people's heart in his breast? Prate a lie into shape Lest truth should cumber the road; Play at the fast and loose Till the world is strangled with tape; Maim the soul's complete To fit the hole of a foad : And filch the dogman's meat To feed the offspring of God?

Nay, but he, this wonder, He cannot palter nor prate,

Though many around him and under. With intellects trained to the curve, Distrust him in spirit and nerve Because his meaning is straight. Measure him ere he depart With those who have governed and led: Larger so much by the heart. Larger so much by the head. Emperor Evermore.

XVII

He holds that, consenting or dissident, Nations must move with the time : Assumes that crime with a precedent Doubles the guilt of the crime; —Denies that a slaver's bond, Or a treaty signed by knaves (Quorum magna pars and beyond Was one of an honest name) Gives an unexpugnable claim To abolishing men into slaves. Emperor Evermore.

Of his country's meeds, in a tone

He will not swagger nor boast

Missuiting a great man most If such should speak of his own: Nor will he act, on her side, From motives baser, indeed, Than a man of a noble pride Can avow for himself at need: Never, for lucre or laurels, Or custom, though such should be rife. Adapting the smaller morals To measure the larger life. He, though the merchants persuade, And the soldiers are eager for strife, Finds not his country in quarrels Only to find her in trade,— While still he accords her such honour As never to flinch for her sake Where men put service upon her, Found heavy to undertake And scarcely like to be paid: Believing a nation may act Unselfishly—shiver a lance (As the least of her sons may, in fact)

And not for a cause of finance. Emperor Evermore.

XIX

Great is he. Who uses his greatness for all. His name shall stand perpetually As a name to applaud and cherish, Not only within the civic wall For the loyal, but also without For the generous and free. Just is he,

Who is just for the popular due As well as the private debt. The praise of nations ready to perish

Fall on him,—crown him in view Of tyrants caught in the net, And statesmen dizzy with fear and doubt!

And though, because they are many, And he is merely one, And nations selfish and cruel Heap up the inquisitor's fuel To kill the body of high intents, And burn great deeds from their place, Till this, the greatest of any, May seem imperfectly done; Courage, whoever circumvents! Courage, courage, whoever is base! The soul of a high intent, be it known, Can die no more than any soul Which God keeps by Him under the

throne And this, at whatever interim. Shall live, and be consummated Into the being of deeds made whole. Courage, courage! happy is he, Of whom (himself among the dead And silent) this word shall be said: -That he might have had the world with him.

But chose to side with suffering men, And had the world against him when

He came to deliver Italy. Emperor Evermore.

THE DANCE

You remember down at Florence our Then the noblest lady present took Cascine.

Where the people on the feast-days walk and drive.

And, through the trees, long-drawn in many a green way,

O'er-roofing hum and murmur like a hive,

The river and the mountains look alive?

You remember the piazzone there, the stand-place

Of carriages a-brim with Florence Beauties,

Who lean and melt to music as the band plays,

Or smile and chat with some one who afoot is,

Or on horseback, in observance of male duties?

'Tis so pretty, in the afternoons of summer,

So many gracious faces brought together!

Call it rout, or call it concert, they have come here.

In the floating of the fan and of the feather.

To reciprocate with beauty the fine weather.

While the flower-girls offer nosegays (because they too

Go with other sweets) at every carriage-door:

Here, by shake of a white finger, signed away to

Some next buyer, who sits buying score on score,

Piling roses upon roses evermore.

And last season, when the French camp had its station

In the meadow-ground, things quickened and grew gaver

Through the mingling of the liberating nation

With this people; groups of Frenchmen everywhere,

Strolling, gazing, judging lightly . . " who was fair."

upon her

To speak nobly from her carriage for the rest;

"Pray these officers from France to do us honour

By dancing with us straightway."— The request

Was gravely apprehended as addressed.

VII

And the men of France bareheaded, bowing lowly,

Led out each a proud signora to the space

Which the startled crowd hadrounded for them—slowly.

Just a touch of still emotion in his face,

Not presuming, through the symbol, on the grace.

VIII

There was silence in the people: some lips trembled,

But none jested. Broke the music, at a glance:

And the daughters of our princes, thus assembled,

Stepped the measure with the gallant sons of France.

Hush! it might have been a Mass, and not a dance.

IX

And they danced there till the blue that overskied us
Swooned with passion, though the

footing seemed sedate;

And the mountains, heaving mighty hearts beside us,

Sighed a rapture in a shadow, to dilate,

And touch the holy stone where Dante sate.

Then the sons of France bareheaded, lowly bowing,

Led the ladies back where kinsmen of the south

Stood, received them;—till, with burst of overflowing Feeling...husbands, brothers,

Florence's male youth,

Turned, and kissed the martial strangers mouth to mouth

XI

And a cry went up, a cry from all that people!

You have heard a people cheering, you suppose,

For the Member, mayor . . . with chorus from the steeple?

This was different: scarce as loud perhaps (who knows?),

For we saw wet eyes around us ere the close.

XII

And we felt as if a nation, too long borne in

By hard wrongers, comprehending in such attitude

That God had spoken somewhere since the morning,

That men were somehow brothers, by no platitude,

Cried exultant in great wonder and free gratitude.

A TALE OF VILLAFRANCA

TOLD IN TUSCANY

My little son, my Florentine,
Sit down beside my knee,
And I will tell you why the sign
Of joy which flushed our Italy,
Has faded since but yesternight;
And why your Florence of delight
Is mourning as you see.

TT

A great man (who was crowned one day)

Imagined a great Deed:

He shaped it out of cloud and clay,
He touched it finely till the seed
Possessed the flower: from heart and
brain

He fed it with large thoughts humane, To help a people's need.

III

He brought it out into the sun—
They blessed it to his face:
"O great pure Deed, that hast undone
So many bad and base!
O generous Deed, heroic Deed,
Come forth, be perfected, succeed,
Deliver by God's grace."

IV

Then sovereigns, statesmen, north and south,

Rose up in wrath and fear, And cried, protesting by one mouth,

"What monster have we here? A great Deed at this hour of day? A great just Deed—and not for pay? Absurd,—or insincere." "And if sincere, the heavier blow
In that case we shall bear,
For where's our blessed 'status quo,'
Our holy treaties, where,—
Our rights to sell a race, or buy,

Protect and pillage, occupy,
And civilise despair?

VI

Some muttered that the great Deed meant

A great pretext to sin;
And others, the pretext, so lent,
Was heinous (to begin).
Volcanic terms of "great" and

" just " ? Admit such tongues of flame, the

Of time and law falls in.

VII

A great Deed in this world of ours?
Unheard of the pretence is:

It threatens plainly the great Powers;
Is fatal in all senses.

A just Deed in the world?—call out The rifles! be not slack about The national defences.

VIII

And many murmured, "From this source

What red blood must be poured!"
And some rejoined, "'Tis even worse;
What red tape is ignored!"
All cursed the Doer for an evil
Called here, enlarging on the Devil—

Called here, enlarging on the Devil,—
There, monkeying the Lord!

Some said, it could not be explained, Some, could not be excused; And others, "Leave it unrestrained, Gehenna's self is loosed."

And all cried, "Crush it, maim it, gag it!

Set dog-toothed lies to tear it ragged, Truncated and traduced!"

But HE stood sad before the sun,
(The peoples felt their fate).
"The world is many,—I am one;
My great Deed was too great.
God's fruit of justice ripens slow:
Men's souls are narrow; let them
grow.

My brothers, we must wait."

×τ

The tale is ended, child of mine, Turned graver at my knee.

They say your eyes, my Florentine, Are English: it may be:

And yet I've marked as blue a pair Following the doves across the square At Venice by the sea.

XII

Ah child! ah child! I cannot say
A word more. You conceive
The reason now, why just to-day
We see our Florence grieve.
Ah child, look up into the sky!
In this low world, where great Deeds

die,

What matter if we live?

A COURT LADY

Her hair was tawny with gold, her eyes with purple were dark, Her cheeks' pale opal burnt with a

red and restless spark.

Never was lady of Milan nobler in name and in race;

Never was lady of Italy fairer to see in the face.

III

Never was lady on earth more true as woman and wife,

Larger in judgment and instinct, prouder in manners and life.

IV

She stood in the early morning, and said to her maidens "Bring That silken robe made ready to wear at the Court of the King.

"Bring me the clasps of diamond, lucid, clear of the mote,

Clasp me the large at the waist, and clasp me the small at the throat.

VI

"Diamonds to fasten the hair, and diamonds to fasten the sleeves, Laces to drop from their rays, like a powder of snow from the eaves."

VII

Gorgeous she entered the sunlight which gathered her up in a flame, While, straight in her open carriage, she to the hospital came.

In she went at the door, and gazing On she passed to a Frenchman, his from end to end,

each is the place of a friend."

Up she passed through the wards, and stood at a young man's bed: Bloody the band on his brow, and livid the droop of his head.

"Art thou a Lombard, my brother? Happy art thou," she cried, And smiled like Italy on him: he d camed in her face and died.

Pale with his passing soul, she went on still to a second:

He was a grave hard man, whose years by dungeons were reckoned.

Wounds in his body were sore, wounds in his life were sorer.

"Art thou a Romagnole?" Her eyes drove lightnings before her.

Austrian and priest had joined to double and tighten the cord Able to bind thee, O strong one,-free by the stroke of a sword.

XIV

"Now be grave for the rest of us, using the life overcast

To ripen our wine of the present (too new) in glooms of the past.

Down she stepped to a pallet where lay a face like a girl's

Young, and pathetic with dying,—a deep black hole in the curls.

"Art thou from Tuscany, brother? and seest thou, dreaming in pain, Thy mother stand in the piazza, searching the list of the slain?'

Kind as a mother herself, she touched his cheeks with her hands:

"Blessed is she who has borne thee, although she should weep as she stands,'

XVIII

arm carried off by a ball:

"Many and low are the pallets, but Kneeling . . . "O more than my brother! how shall I thank thee for all?

" Each of the heroes around us has fought for his land and line,

But thou hast fought for a stranger, in hate of a wrong not thine.

"Happy are all free peoples, too strong to be dispossessed.

But blessed are those among nations, who dare to be strong for the rest!"

Ever she passed on her way, and came to a couch where pined

One with a face from Venetia, white with a hope out of mind.

Long she stood and gazed, and twice she tried at the name,

But two great crystal tears were all that faltered and came.

Only a tear for Venice?-she turned as in passion and loss,

And stooped to his forehead and kissed it, as if she were kissing the Cross.

XXIV

Faint with that strain of heart she moved on then to another,

Stern and strong in his death. " And dost thou suffer, my brother?"

Holding his hands in hers :-- " Out of the Piedmont lion .

Cometh the sweetness of freedom! sweetest to live or to die on.'

Holding his cold rough hands,-" Well, oh, well have ye done

In noble, noble Piedmont, who would not be noble alone.

XXVII

Back he fell while she spoke. She rose to her feet with a spring,-"That was a Piedmontese! and this is the Court of the King."

AN AUGUST VOICE

"Una voce augusta."-Monitore Toscano.

Τ.

You'LL take back your Grand Duke?

I made the treaty upon it.

Just venture a quiet rebuke;

Dall' Ongaro write him a sonnet;

Ricasoli gently explain

Some need of the constitution: He'll swear to it over again,

Providing an "easy solution." You'll call back the Grand Duke.

II

You'll take back your Grand Duke? I promised the Emperor Francis To argue the case by his book,

And ask you to meet his advances.

The Ducal cause, we know

(Whether you or he be the wronger), Has very strong points;—although Your bayonets, there, have stronger. You'll call back the Grand Duke.

TTT

You'll take back your Grand Duke? He is not pure altogether.

For instance, the oath which he took
(In the Forty-eight rough weather)
He'd "nail your flag to his mast,"

Then softly scuttled the boat you Hoped to escape in at last,

And both by a "Proprio motu."
You'll call back the Grand Duke.

TV

You'll take back your Grand Duke?
The scheme meets nothing to shock
it

In this smart letter, look,

We found in Radetsky's pocket; Where his Highness in sprightly style Of the flower of his Tuscans wrote, "These heads be the hottest in file; Pray shoot them the quickest." Ouote,

And call back the Grand Duke.

V

You'll take back your Grand Duke? There are some things to object to. He cheated, betrayed, and forsook, Then called in the foe to protect you.

He taxed you for wines and for meats Throughout that eight years' pastime Of Austria's drum in your streets— Of course you remember the last time

You called back your Grand Duke?

VI

You'll take back the Grand Duke?
It is not race he is poor in,
Although he never could brook

The patriot cousin at Turin. His love of kin you discern,

By his hate of your flag and me— So decidedly apt to turn

All colours at the sight of the Three.¹

You'll call back the Grand Duke.

VII

You'll take back your Grand Duke?
'Twas weak that he fled from the
Pitti;

But consider how little he shook At thought of bombarding your

city!

And, balancing that with this,
The Christian rule is plain for us;
... Or the Holy Father's Swiss
Have shot his Perugians in vain for
us.

You'll call back the Grand Duke.

VIII

Pray take back your Grand Duke.

—I, too, have suffered persuasion.

All Europe, raven and rook, Screeched at me armed for your

nation.
Your cause in my heart struck spurs:

I swept such warnings aside for you:

My very child's eyes, and Hers,
Grew like my brother's who died
for you.

You'll call back the Grand Duke?

IX

You'll take back your Grand Duke?

My French fought nobly with
reason,—

Left many a Lombardy nook

Red as with wine out of season.

Little we grudged what was done there,

Paid freely your ransom of blood: Our heroes stark in the sun there,

We would not recall if we could. You'll call back the Grand Duke? The Italian tricolor: red, green, and white, v

You'll take back your Grand Duke?

His son rode fast as he got off

That day on the enemy's hook, When I had an epaulette shot off. Though splashed (as I saw him afai

Though splashed (as I saw him afar, no,

Near) by those ghastly rains,

The mark, when you've washed him in Arno,

Will scarcely be larger than Cain's. You'll call back the Grand Duke?

X1

You'll take back your Grand Duke? 'Twill be so simple, quite beautiful: The shepherd recovers his crook,
... If you should be sheep, and dutiful.

I spoke a word worth chalking On Milan's wall—but stay, Here's Poniatowsky talking,— You'll listen to him to-day.

And call back the Grand Duke.

XI

You'll take back your Grand Duke? Observe, there's no one to force it,—Unless the Madonna, Saint Luke Drew for you, choose to endorse it. I charge you, by great Saint Martino And prodigies quickened by wrong, Remember your Dead on Ticino; Be worthy, be constant, be strong—Bah!—call back the Grand Duke!

CHRISTMAS GIFTS

" ὡς βασιλεῖ, ὡς θεῷ, ὡς νεκρῷ." —GREGORY NAZIANZEN.

I

THE Pope on Christmas Day
Sits in Saint Peter's chair;
But the peoples murmur and say,
"Our souls are sick and forlorn,
And who will show us where
Is the stable where Christ was
born?"

II

The star is lost in the dark;
The manger is lost in the straw;
The Christ cries faintly . . . hark! . .
Through bands that swaddle and strangle—

But the Pope in the chair of awe Looks down the great quadrangle. III

The Magi kneel at His foot,
Kings of the East and West,
But, instead of the angels (mute
Is the "Peace on earth" of their

song),
The peoples, perplexed and opprest,
Are sighing, "How long, how long?"

757

And, instead of the kine, bewilder in Shadow of aisle and dome,

The bear who tore up the children, The fox who burnt up the corn, And the wolf who suckled at Rome

Brothers to slay and to scorn.

v

Cardinals left and right of him, Worshippers round and beneath, The silver trumpets at sight of him Thrill with a musical blast:

But the people say through their teeth,

"Trumpets? we wait for the Last!"

VI

He sits in the place of the Lord,
And asks for the gifts of the time;
Gold, for the haft of a sword
To win back Romagna averse,
Incense, to sweeten a crime,
And myrrh, to embitter a curse.

VII

Then a king of the West said, "Good!—
I bring thee the gifts of the time;
Red, for the patriot's blood,
Green, for the martyr's crown,
White, for the dew and the rime,
When the morning of God comes

SZZZZ

down.'

O mystic tricolor bright!
The Pope's heart quailed like a man's;
The cardinals froze at the sight,

Bowing their tonsures hoary:
And the eyes in the peacock-fans

Winked at the alien glory,

IX

But the peoples exclaimed in hope, "Now blessed be he who has brought

These gifts of the time to the Pope, When our souls were sick and forlorn, -And here is the star we sought, To show us where Christ was born!"

ITALY AND THE WORLD

FLORENCE, Bologna, Parma, Modena. When you named them a year ago, So many graves reserved by God, in a Day of judgment, you seemed to know,

To open and let out the resurrection.

And meantime (you made your reflection If you were English) was nought to

be done

But sorting sables, in predilection For all those martyrs dead and

Till the new earth and heaven made ready.

And if your politics were not heady, Violent . . . "Good," you added. " good

In all things! Mourn on sure and

Churchyard thistles are wholesome

For our European wandering asses.

"The date of the resurrection passes Human fore-knowledge: men unborn

Will gain by it (even in the lower classes)

But none of these. It is not the morn

Because the cock of France is crowing.

"Cocks crow at midnight, seldom knowing

Starlight from dawnlight: 'tis a mad Poor creature." Here you paused. and growing

Scornful . . . suddenly, let us add, The trumpet sounded, the graves were open.

Life and life and life! agrope in The dusk of death, warm hands, stretched out

For swords, proved more life still to Passing the frontier in love and abhope in,

Beyond and behind. Arise with a shout.

Nation of Italy, slain and buried!

Hill to hill and turret to turret Flashing the tricolor,—newly created

Beautiful Italy, calm, unhurried, Rise heroic and renovated, Rise to the final restitution.

Rise; prefigure the grand solution Of earth's municipal, insular insular schisms.

Statesmen draping self-love's conclu-

In cheap, vernacular patriotisms. Unable to give up Judæa for Jesus,

Bring us the higher example; release

Into the larger coming time: And into Christ's broad garment piece us

Rags of virtue as poor as crime, National selfishness, civic vaunting.

No more Jew nor Greek then, -taunt-

Nor taunted; -no more England nor France!

But one confederate brotherhood planting

One flag only, to mark the advance, Onward and upward, of all humanity.

For civilisation perfected Is fully developed Christianity.

"Measure the frontier," shall it be said.

"Count the ships," in national vanity?

—Count the nation's heart-beats sooner.

For, though behind by a cannon or schooner,

That nation still is predominant. Whose pulse beats quickest in zeal to oppugn or

Succour another, in wrong or want, horrence.

XIII

Modena, Parma, Bologna, Florence, Open us out the wider way!

Dwarf in that chapel of old Saint Lawrence

Your Michel Angelo's giant "Day,"
With the grandeur of this Day breaking o'er us!

XIV

Ye who, restrained as an ancient chorus,

Mute while the coryphæus spake, Hush your separate voices before us, Sink your separate lives for the sake

Of one sole Italy's living for ever!

3737

Givers of coat and cloak too,—never Grudging that purple of yours at the best,—

By your heroic will and endeavour Each sublimely dispossessed,

That all may inherit what each surrenders!

XVI

Earth shall bless you, O noble emenders

On egotist nations! Ye shall lead The plough of the world, and sow new splendours

Into the furrow of things, for seed,— Ever the richer for what ye have given.

XVII

Lead us and teach us, till earth and heaven

Grow larger around us and higher above.

Our sacrament-bread has a bitter leaven;
We bait our traps with the name of

love,
Till hate itself has a kinder meaning.

XVIII

Oh, this world: this cheating and screening

Of cheats! this conscience for candle-wicks,

Not beacon-fires! this overweening Of underhand diplomatical tricks, Dared for the country while scorned for the counter!

XIX

Oh, this envy of those who mount here,

And oh, this malice to make them trip!

Rather quenching the fire there, drying the fount here,

To frozen body and thirsty lip,

Than leave to a neighbour their ministration.

XX

I cry aloud in my poet-passion, Viewing my England o'er Alp and sea.

I loved her more in her ancient fashion: She carries her rifles too thick for

Who spares them so in the cause of a brother.

XXI

Suspicion, panic? end this pother.

The sword, kept sheathless at peace-time, rusts.

None fears for himself while he feels for another:

The brave man either fights or trusts.

And wears no mail in his private chamber.

XXII

Beautiful Italy! golden amber

Warm with the kisses of lover and traitor!

Thou who hast drawn us on to remember,

Draw us to hope now: let us be greater

By this new future than that old story.

XXIII

Till truer glory replaces all glory,

As the torch grows blind at the dawn of day;

And the nations, rising up, their sorry And foolish sins shall put away,

As children their toys when the teacher enters.

XXIX

Till Love's one centre devour these centres

Of many self-loves; and the patriot's trick

To better his land by egotist ventures, Defamed from a virtue, shall make men sick, As the scalp at the belt of some red "For I am bound by gratitude, hero.

XXV

Left by the sun on the mountain's dewv side:

Churchman's charities, tender as Nero.

Indian suttee, heathen suicide, Service to rights divine, proved hollow:

And Heptarchy patriotisms must follow.

—National voices, distinct vet dependent,

Ensphering each other, as swallow does swallow.

With circles still widening and ever ascendant.

In multiform life to united progression,-

XXVII

And when, in These shall remain. the session

Of nations, the separate language is heard.

Each shall aspire, in sublime indiscretion,

To help with a thought or exalt with a word

Less her own than her rival's honour.

XXVIII

Each Christian nation shall take upon The law of the Christian man in

vast: The crown of the getter shall fall to

the donor,

And last shall be first while first shall be last.

And to love best shall still be, to reign unsurpassed.

A CURSE FOR A NATION

PROLOGUE

I HEARD an angel speak last night, And he said, "Write!

Write a Nation's curse for me, And send it over the Western Sea."

I faltered, taking up the word: " Not so, my lord! If curses must be, choose another To send thy curse against my brother. By love and blood,

To brothers of mine across the sea, For certain virtues have dropped to Who stretch out kindly hands to me."

> "Therefore," the voice said, "shalt thou write

My curse to-night.

From the summits of love a curse is driven.

As lightning is from the tops of heaven.

"Not so," I answered. " Evermore My heart is sore For my own land's sins: for little

feet Of children bleeding along the street:

"For parked-up honours that gain-

The right of way:

For almsgiving through a door that is Not open enough for two friends to kiss:

" For love of freedom which abates Beyond the Straits:

For patriot virtue starved to vice on Self-praise, self-interest, and suspicion:

" For an oligarchic parliament, And bribes well-meant.

What curse to another land assign. When heavy-souled for the sins of mine?"

'Therefore," the voice said, "shalt thou write My curse to-night.

Because though hast strength to see and hate

A foul thing done within thy gate."

"Not so," I answered once again. "To curse, choose men.

For I, a woman, have only known How the heart melts and the tears run down."

"Therefore," the voice said, "shalt thou write

My curse to-night.

Some women weep and curse, I say (And no one marvels), night and day.

"And thou shalt take their part tonight,

Weep and write.

A curse from the depths of womanhood

Is very salt, and bitter, and good."

So thus I wrote, and mourned indeed,
What all may read.
And thus, as was enjoined on me,

And thus, as was enjoined on me I send it over the Western Sea.

THE CURSE

т

Because ye have broken your own chain .

With the strain

Of brave men climbing a Nation's height,

Yet thence bear down with brand and thong

On souls of others,—for this wrong This is the curse. Write.

Because yourselves are standing straight

In the state

Of Freedom's foremost acolyte, Yet keep calm footing all the time On writhing bond-slaves,—for this crime

This is the curse. Write.

Because ye prosper in God's name, With a claim

To honour in the old world's sight, Yet do the fiend's work perfectly' In strangling martyrs,—for this lie This is the curse. Write.

Ye shall watch while kings conspire Round the people's smouldering fire,

And, warm for your part,
Shall never dare—O shame!
To utter the thought into flame
Which burns at your heart.

Ye shall watch while nations strive With the bloodhounds, die or survive, Drop faint from their jaws,

This is the curse. Write.

Or throttle them backward to death, And only under your breath Shall favour the cause.

This is the curse. Write.

Ye shall watch while strong men draw The nets of feudal law

To strangle the weak,

And, counting the sin for a sin, Your soul shall be sadder within Than the word ye shall speak.

This is the curse. Write.

When good men are praying erect That Christ may avenge His elect And deliver the earth,

The prayer in your ears, said low, Shall sound like the tramp of a foe That's driving you forth.

This is the curse. Write.

When wise men give you their praise, They shall pause in the heat of the phrase,

As if carried too far.

When ye boast your own charters kept true,

Ye shall blush;—for the thing which ye do

Derides what ye are.
This is the curse. Write.

When fools cast taunts at your gate, Your scorn ye shall somewhat abate As ye look o'er the wall,

For your conscience, tradition, and name

Explode with a deadlier blame
Than the worst of them all.
This is the curse. Write.

Go, wherever ill deeds shall be done, Go, plant your flag in the sun Beside the ill-doers! And recoil from clenching the curse

Of God's witnessing Universe With a curse of yours.

This is the curse. Write.

LAST POEMS

1862

TO "GRATEFUL FLORENCE," TO THE MUNICIPALITY, HER REPRESENTATIVE. AND TO TOMMASEO, ITS SPOKESMAN, MOST GRATEFULLY.

LAST POEMS ADVERTISEMENT

THESE Poems are given as they occur on a list drawn up last June. A few had already been printed in periodi-

There is hardly such direct warrant for publishing the Translations; which were only intended, many years ago, to accompany and explain certain Engravings after ancient Gems, in the projected work of a friend, by whose kindness they are now recovered: but as two of the original series (the "Adonis" of Bion, and "Song to the Rose" from Achilles Tatius) have subsequently appeared, it is presumed that the remainder may not improperly follow.

A single recent version is added. LONDON, February, 1862.

LITTLE MATTIE

DEAD! Thirteen a month ago! Short and narrow her life's walk: Lover's love she could not know Even by a dream or talk: Too young to be glad of youth,

Missing honour, labour, rest, And the warmth of a babe's mouth

At the blossom of her breast. Must you pity her for this And for all the loss it is, You, her mother, with wet face, Having had all in your case?

Just so young but yesternight, Now she is as old as death. Meek, obedient in your sight, Gentle to a beck or breath Only on last Monday! Yours, Answering you like silver bells Lightly touched! An hour matures:

You can teach her nothing else.

She has seen the mystery hid Under Egypt's pyramid: By those eyelids pale and close Nowshe knows what Rhamses knows.

Cross her quiet hands, and smooth Down her patient locks of silk, Cold and passive as in truth You your fingers in spilt milk

Drew along a marble floor; But her lips you cannot wring Into saying a word more,

"Yes," or "No," or such a thing: Though you call and beg and wreak Half your soul out in a shriek, She will lie there in default And most innocent revolt.

Ay, and if she spoke, maybe She would answer, like the Son, "What is now 'twixt thee and me?" Dreadful answer! better none. Yours on Monday, God's to-day! Yours, your child, your blood,

your heart, Called . . . you called her, did you "Little Mattie" for your part? Now already it sounds strange. And you wonder, in this change,

What He calls His angel-creature. Higher up than you can reach her. 'Twas a green and easy world As she took it; room to play

(Though one's hair might get uncurled At the far end of the day). What she suffered she shook off In the sunshine; what she sinned

She could pray on high enough To keep safe above the wind. If reproved by God or you, 'Twas to better her, she knew; And if crossed, she gathered still 'Twas to cross out something ill. ***

You, you had the right, you thought, To survey her with sweet scorn, Poor gay child, who had not caught Yet the octave-stretch forlorn

Of your larger wisdom! Nay, Now your places are changed so,

In that same superior way
She regards you dull and low
As you did herself exempt

As you did nersell exempt
From life's sorrows. Grand contempt
Of the spirits risen awhile,
Who look back with such a smile!

VII

There's the sting of't. That, I think, Hurts the most a thousandfold! To feel sudden, at a wink,

Some dear child we used to scold, Praise, love both ways, kiss and tease, Teach and tumble as our own,

All its curls about our knees, Rise up suddenly full-grown. Who could wonder such a sight Made a woman mad outright? Show me Michael with the sword Rather than such angels, Lord!

A FALSE STEP

Sweet, thou hast trod on a heart.
Pass! there's a world full of men;
And women as fair as thou art
Must do such things now and then.

Thou only hast stepped unaware,— Malice, not one can impute; And why should a heart have been there

In the way of a fair woman's foot?

111

It was not a stone that could trip, Nor was it a thorn that could rend: Put up thy proud under lip! 'Twas merely the heart of a friend.

And yet peradventure one day
Thou, sitting alone at the glass,
Remarking the bloom gone away,
Where the smile in its dimplement

was,

And seeking around thee in vain From hundreds who flattered before,

Such a word as "Oh, not in the main Do I hold thee less precious, but more!" . . .

177

Thou'lt sigh, very like, on thy part,
"Of all I have known or can know,
I wish I had only that Heart
I trod upon ages ago!"

VOID IN LAW

SLEEP, little babe, on my knee,
Sleep, for the midnight is chill,
And the moon has died out in the

And the great human world goeth

Sleep, for the wicked agree: Sleep, let them do as they will. Sleep.

II

Sleep, thou hast drawn from my breast

The last drop of milk that was good; And now, in a dream, suck the rest, Lest the real should trouble thy blood.

Suck, little lips dispossessed,

As we kiss in the air whom we would.

Sleep.

717

O lips of thy father! the same, So like! Very deeply they swore When he gave me his ring and his

To take back, I imagined, no more! And now is all changed like a game, Though the old cards are used as of

yore? Sleep.

IV

"Void in law," said the Courts.
Something wrong

In the forms? Yet, "Till death part us two,

I, James, take thee, Jessie," was strong,

And ONE witness competent. True Such a marriage was worth an old song,

Heard in Heaven though, as plain as the New.

Sleep.

Sleep, little child, his and mine!

Her throat has the antelope curve, And her cheek just the colour and line Which fade not before him nor swerve:

Yet she has no child !-- the divine Seal of right upon loves that deserve.

Sleep.

My child! though the world take her

Saving, "She was the woman to choose.

He had eves, was a man in his heart,"-

We twain the decision refuse: We . . . weak as I am as thou art . . . Cling on to him, never to loose. Sleep.

He thinks that, when done with this And her eyes were alive in their depth,

All's ended? he'll new-stamp the

Yes, Cæsar's-but not in our case. Let him learn we are waiting be-

The grave's mouth, the heaven's gate, God's face,

With implacable love evermore. Sleep.

VIII

He's ours, though he kissed her but He's ours, though she kissed in

reply;

He's ours, though himself disavow, And God's universe favour the lie; Ours to claim, ours to clasp, ours below.

Ours above . . . if we live, if we

Sleep.

Ah baby, my baby, too rough Is my lullaby? What have I said? Sleep! When I've wept long enough I shall learn to weep softly instead, And piece with some alien stuff

Sleep.

Two souls met upon thee, my sweet: Two loves led thee out to the sun:

Alas, pretty hands, pretty feet,

If the one who remains (only one) Set her grief at thee, turned in a heat To thine enemy,—were it well done?

May He of the manger stand near And love thee! An infant He came To His own who rejected Him here. But the Magi brought gifts all the

I hurry the cross on my Dear! My gifts are the griefs I declaim! Sleep.

same.

blue.

LORD WALTER'S WIFE

"Bur why do you go?" said the lady. while both sate under the vew. as the kraken beneath the sea-

"Because I fear you," he answered; -" because you are far too fair. And able to strangle my soul in a

mesh of your gold-coloured hair."

"Oh, that," she said, " is no reason! Such knots are quickly undone. And too much beauty, I reckon, is nothing but too much sun."

"Yet farewell so," he answered ;-"the sunstroke's fatal at times. I value your husband, Lord Walter, whose gallop rings still from the limes.

"Oh, that," she said, " is no reason. You smell a rose through a fence: If two should smell it, what matter? who grumbles, and where's the

pretence?"

"But I," he replied, "have promised another, when love was free. My heart to lie smooth for thy head. To love her alone, alone, who alone

and afar loves me.'

"Why, that," she said, "is no reason. Love's always free. I am told.

Will you vow to be safe from the To uses unlawful and fatal. The headache on Tuesday, and think it will hold?"

"But you," he replied, "have a daughter, a young little child, who was laid

In your lap to be pure; so I leave you: the angels would make me afraid."

"Oh, that," she said, "is no reason. The angels keep out of the way:

And Dora, the child, observes nothing, although you should please me and stay."

At which he rose up in his anger,-"Why, now, you no longer are

Why, now, you no longer are fatal, but ugly and hateful, I swear."

At which she laughed out in her scorn: "These men! Oh, these men over nice.

Who are shocked if a colour not virtuous is frankly put on by a vice."

Her eyes blazed upon him-"And you! You bring us your vices so near

That we smell them! You think in our presence a thought 'twould defame us to hear!

IIIX

"What reason had you, and what right,—I appeal to your soul from my life,-

To find me too fair as a woman? Why, sir, I am pure, and a wife.

XIV

"Is the day-star too fair up above you? It burns you not. Dare you imply

I brushed you more close than the star does, when Walter had set By illusion, you wanted precisely no me as high?

"If a man finds a woman too fair, he means simply adapted too much praise !--shall I thank you for such?

"Too fair ?-not unless you misuse us! and surely if, once in a while, You attain to it, straightway you

call us no longer too fair, but too vile.

"A moment,—I pray your attention! -I have a poor word in my head

I must utter, though womanly custom would set it down better unsaid.

"You grew, sir, pale to impertinence, once when I showed you a ring.

You kissed my fan when I dropped it. No matter !-- I've broken the thing.

"You did me the honour, perhaps, to be moved at my side now and

In the senses—a vice, I have heard, which is common to beasts and some men.

"Love's a virtue for heroes!-as white as the snow on high hills, And immortal as every great soul is that struggles, endures, and fulfils.

XXI

"I love my Walter profoundly,—you, Maud, though you faltered a week.

For the sake of . . . what was it? an eyebrow? or, less still, a mole on a cheek?

"And since, when all's said, you're too noble to stoop to the frivolous cant

About crimes irresistible, virtues that swindle, betray and supplant,

"I determined to prove to yourself that, whate'er you might dream or avow

more of me than you have now.

XXIV

"There! Look me full in the face! -in the face. Understand, if you can,

That the eyes of such women as I am are clean as the palm of a man.

"Drop his hand, you insult him. Avoid us for fear we should cost vou a scar-

You take us for harlots, I tell you, and not for the women we are.

"You wronged me: but then I considered . . . there's Walter! And so at the end

I vowed that he should not be mulcted, by me, in the hand of a friend.

XXVII

" Have I hurt you indeed? We are quits then. Nay, friend of my Walter, be mine!

Come, Dora, my darling, my angel, and help me to ask him to dine."

BIANCA AMONG THE NIGHTIN-GALES

THE cypress stood up like a church That night we felt our love would hold,

And saintly moonlight seemed to And wash the whole world clean as

gold;

The olives crystallised the vales' Broad slopes until the hills grew strong:

The fireflies and the nightingales Throbbed each to either, flame and song.

The nightingales, the nightingales!

Upon the angle of its shade

The cypress stood, self-balanced high:

Half up, half down, as double-made, Along the ground, against the sky.

And we, too! from such soul-height went

Such leaps of blood, so blindly driven,

Most passionate earth or intense heaven.

The nightingales, the nightingales!

We paled with love, we shook with love.

We kissed so close we could not vow; Till Giulio whispered "Sweet, above God's Ever guarantees this Now." And through his words the nightin-

Drove straight and full their long

clear call,

Like arrows through heroic mails. And love was awful in it all.

The nightingales, the nightingales!

O cold white moonlight of the north. Refresh these pulses, quench this

O coverture of death drawn forth Across this garden-chamber . . . well!

But what have nightingales to do In gloomy England, called the free . . .

(Yes, free to die in! . . .) when we

Are sundered, singing still to me? And still they sing, the nightingales!

I think I hear him, how he cried "My own soul's life!" between their notes.

Each man has but one soul supplied, And that's immortal. Though his throat's

On fire with passion now, to her He can't say what to me he said! And yet he moves her, they aver.

The nightingales sing through my

The nightingales, the nightingales!

He says to her what moves her most. He would not name his soul within

Her hearing,—rather pays her cost With praises to her lips and chin.

Man has but one soul, 'tis ordained, And each soul but one love, I add: Yet souls are damned and love's pro-

faned. These nightingales will sing me

We scarce knew if our nature meant | The nightingales, the nightingales!

I marvel how the birds can sing. There's little difference, in their And followed him as he did her

Betwixt our Tuscan trees that spring As vital flames into the blue, And dull round blots of foliage meant, Like saturated sponges here

To suck the fogs up. As content Is he too in this land, 'tis clear. And still they sing, the nightingales.

My native Florence! dear, forgone! I see across the Alpine ridge

How the last feast-day of Saint John Shot rockets from Carraia bridge. The luminous city, tall with fire,

Trod deep down in that river of

While many a boat with lamp and

Skimmed birdlike over glittering

I will not hear these nightingales.

I seem to float, we seem to float Down Arno's stream in festive guise:

A boat strikes flame into our boat. And up that lady seems to rise As then she rose. The shock had flashed

A vision on us! What a head. eyeballs !-beauty What leaping dashed

To splendour by a sudden dread. And still they sing, the nightingales.

Too bold to sin, too weak to die : Such women are so. As for me, I would we had drowned there, he and

That moment, loving perfectly. He had not caught her with her loosed Gold ringlets . . . rarer in the south .

Nor heard the "Grazie tanto" bruise To sweetness by her English mouth. And still they sing, the nightingales.

She had not reached him at my heart With her fine tongue, as snakes Kill flies; nor had I, for my part,

Yearned after, in my desperate need.

To coasts left bitter by the tide, Whose very nightingales, elsewhere Delighting, torture and deride! For still they sing, the nightingales.

A worthless woman; mere cold clay As all false things are ! but so fair. She takes the breath of men away Who gaze upon her unaware.

I would not play her larcenous tricks To have her looks! She lied and stole.

And spat into my love's pure pyx The rank saliva of her soul.

And still they sing, the nightingales.

I would not for her white and pink, Though such he likes—her grace of limb.

Though such he has praised—nor vet. I think.

For life itself, though spent with

Commit such sacrilege, affront

God's nature which is love, intrude Twixt two affianced souls, and hunt Like spiders, in the altar's wood. I cannot bear these nightingales.

If she chose sin, some gentler guise She might have sinned in, so it

She might have pricked out both my

And I still seen him in my dreams! -Or drugged me in my soup or wine, Nor left me angry afterward: To die here with his hand in mine.

His breath upon me, were not hard. (Our Lady hush these nightingales!)

But set a springe for him, " mio ben," My only good, my first last love !-Though Christ knows well what sin is, when

He sees some things done they must move

Himself to wonder. Let her pass. I think of her by night and day. Must I too join her . . . out, alas!..

With Giulio, in each word I say? And evermore the nightingales!

Giulio, my Giulio !- sing they so, And you be silent? Do I speak,

And you not hear? An arm you throw

Round some one, and I feel so weak?

- - Oh, owl-like birds! They sing for

They sing for hate, they sing for doom!

They'll sing through death who sing through night,

They'll sing and stun me in the tomb-

The nightingales, the nightingales!

MY KATE

SHE was not as pretty as women I know,

And yet all your best made of sunshine and snow

Drop to shade, melt to nought in the long-trodden ways.

While she's still remembered on warm and cold days-

My Kate.

Her air had a meaning, her movements a grace:

You turned from the fairest to gaze on her face:

And when you had once seen her forehead and mouth.

You saw as distinctly her soul and her truth-

My Kate.

Such a blue inner light from her eyelids outbroke,

You looked at her silence and fancied she spoke:

When she did, so peculiar yet soft was the tone.

Though the loudest spoke also, you heard her alone-

My Kate.

I doubt if she said to you much that could act As a thought or suggestion: she did

not attract

In the sense of the brilliant or wise: I

'Twas her thinking of others made you think of her-

My Kate.

She never found fault with you, never implied

Your wrong by her right; and yet men at her side

Grew nobler, girls purer, as through the whole town

The children were gladder that pulled at her gown-

My Kate.

None knelt at her feet confessed lovers in thrall:

They knelt more to God than they used,-that was all:

If you praised her as charming, some asked what you meant,

But the charm of her presence was felt when she went-

My Kate.

The weak and the gentle, the ribald and rude.

She took as she found them, and did them all good;

It always was so with her—see what you have!

She has made the grass greener even here . . . with her grave-My Kate.

VIII

My dear one !-when thou wast alive with the rest.

I held thee the sweetest and loved thee the best:

And now thou art dead, shall I not take thy part

As thy smiles used to do for thyself, my sweet Heart-

My Kate?

A SONG FOR THE RAGGED SCHOOLS OF LONDON

WRITTEN IN ROME

I AM listening here in Rome. "England's strong," say many speakers,

" If she winks, the Czar must come, Prow and topsail, to the breakers."

"England's rich in coal and oak," Adds a Roman, getting moody.

" If she shakes a travelling cloak, Down our Appian roll the scudi."

"England's righteous," they rejoin, "Who shall grudge her exaltations, When her wealth of golden coin Works the welfare of the nations?"

I am listening here in Rome. Over Alps a voice is sweeping-" England's cruel! save us some Of these victims in her keeping!"

As the cry beneath the wheel Of an old triumphal Roman Cleft the people's shouts like steel.

While the show was spoilt for no

Comes that voice. Let others shout. Other poets praise my land here: I am sadly sitting out,

Praying, "God forgive her grand-

Shall we boast of empire, where Time with ruin sits commissioned? In God's liberal blue air Peter's dome itself looks wizened:

VIII

And the mountains, in disdain, Gather back their lights of opal From the dumb, despondent plain, Heaped with jawbones of a people.

Lordly English, think it o'er, Cæsar's doing is all undone! You have cannons on your shore, And free Parliaments in London,

Princes' parks, and merchants' homes, Tents for soldiers, ships for seamen,-

Ay, but ruins worse than Rome's In your pauper men and women.

Women leering through the gas (Just such bosoms used to nurse you),

Men, turned wolves by famine—pass ! Those can speak themselves, and curse you.

But these others-children small. Spilt like blots about the city, Quay, and street, and palace-wall-Take them up into your pity!

Ragged children with bare feet. Whom the angels in white raiment Know the names of, to repeat When they come on you for payment.

Ragged children, hungry-eyed, Huddled up out of the coldness On your doorsteps, side by side, Till your footman damns their boldness.

In the alleys, in the squares, Begging, lying little rebels; In the noisy thoroughfares, Struggling on with piteous trebles.

Patient children—think what pain Makes a young child patientponder! Wronged too commonly to strain

After right, or wish, or wonder.

Wicked children, with peaked chins, And old foreheads! there are many With no pleasures except sins, Gambling with a stolen penny.

XVIII

Sickly children, that whine low To themselves and not their mothers.

From mere habit,—never so Hoping help or care from others.

Healthy children, with those blue English eyes, fresh from their Maker.

Fierce and ravenous, staring through At the brown loaves of the baker.

I am listening here in Rome, And the Romans are confessing, English children pass in bloom All the prettiest made for blessing. XXI

"Angli angeli!" (resumed From the mediæval story)

"Such rose angelhoods, emplumed In such ringlets of pure glory!"

$_{\rm IIXX}$

Can we smooth down the bright hair, O my sisters, calm, unthrilled in Our heart's pulses? Can we bear The sweet looks of our own chil-

dren,

XXIII

While those others, lean and small, Scurf and mildew of the city, Spot our streets, convict us all Till we take them into pity?

XXIV

"Is it our fault?" you reply,
"When, throughout civilisation,
Every nation's empery
Is asserted by starvation?

XXV

"All these mouths we cannot feed, And we cannot clothe these bodies." Well, if man's so hard indeed, Let them learn at least what God is!

XXVI

Little outcasts from life's fold,
The grave's hope they may be
joined in,
By Christ's covenant consoled

For our social contract's grinding.

XXVII

If no better can be done, Let us do but this,—endeavour That the sun behind the sun Shine upon them while they shiver!

XXVIII

On the dismal London flags,
Through the cruel social juggle,
Put a thought beneath their rags
To ennoble the heart's struggle.

XXIX

O my sisters, not so much
Are we asked for—not a blossom
From our children's nosegay, such
As we gave it from our bosom,—

XXX

Not the milk left in their cup, Not the lamp while they are sleeping,

Not the little cloak hung up While the coat's in daily keeping,—

XXXI

But a place in RAGGED Schools, Where the outcasts may to-morrow Learn by gentle words and rules Just the uses of their sorrow.

HXXXII

O my sisters! children small, Blue-eyed, wailing through the city—

Our own babes cry in them all: Let us take them into pity.

MAY'S LOVE

You love all, you say, Round, beneath, above me: Find me then some way Better than to love me, Me, too, dearest May!

O world-kissing eyes

Which the blue heavens melt to!
I, sad, overwise,
Loathe the sweet looks dealt to

All things—men and flies.

III

You love all, you say:
Therefore, Dear, abate me
Just your love, I pray!
Shut your eyes and hate me—
Only me—fair May!

AMY'S CRUELTY

FAIR Amy of the terraced house, Assist me to discover Why you who would not hurt a mouse Can torture so your lover.

II

You give your coffee to the cat, You stroke the dog for coming, And all your face grows kinder at The little brown bee's humming.

III

But when he haunts your door . . . the town

Marks coming and marks going . . . You seem to have stitched your eyelids down

To that long piece of sewing!

You never give a look, not you, Nor drop him a "Good morning," To keep his long day warm and blue, Though treated worse than dog and So fretted by your scorning.

She shook her head—"The mouse and bee

For crumb or flower will linger: The dog is happy at my knee, The cat purrs at my finger.

"But he . . . to him, the least thing given

Means great things at a distance : He wants my world, my sun, my heaven.

Soul, body, whole existence.

"They say love gives as well as takes;

But I'm a simple maiden,— My mother's first smile when she

wakes I still have smiled and prayed in.

"I only know my mother's love Which gives all and asks nothing; And this new loving sets the groove Too much the way of loathing.

"Unless he gives me all in change, I forfeit all things by him: The risk is terrible and strange—

I tremble, doubt . . . deny him.

"He's sweetest friend, or hardest foe, Best angel, or worst devil; I either hate or . . . love him so, I can't be merely civil!

"You trust a woman who puts forth Her blossoms thick as summer's? You think she dreams what love is worth,

Who casts it to new-comers?

"Such love's a cowslip-ball to fling, A moment's pretty pastime;

I give . . . all me, if anything, The first time and the last time.

"Dear neighbour of the trellised house.

A man should murmur never,

mouse,

Till doted on for ever!"

MY HEART AND I

Enough! we're tired, my heart and I. We sit beside the headstone thus. And wish that name were carved

The moss reprints more tenderly The hard types of the mason's

As heaven's sweet life renews earth's life With which we're tired, my heart and

You see we're tired, my heart and I. We dealt with books, we trusted

And in our own blood drenched the

As if such colours could not fly. We walked too straight for fortune's end.

We loved too true to keep a friend; At last we're tired, my heart and I.

How tired we feel, my heart and I! We seem of no use in the world; Our fancies hang grey and uncurled About men's eyes indifferently;

Our voice which thrilled you so,

You sleep; our tears are only wet: What do we here, my heart and I?

So tired, so tired, my heart and I! It was not thus in that old time When Ralph sat with me 'neath the lime

To watch the sunset from the sky. "Dear love, you're looking tired." he said;

I, smiling at him, shook my head: 'Tis now we're tired, my heart and I.

So tired, so tired, my heart and I! Though now none takes me on his

To fold me close and kiss me warm Till each quick breath end in a sigh

Of happy languor. Now, alone, We lean upon this graveyard stone, Uncheered, unkissed, my heart and I.

VI.

Tired out we are, my heart and I.
Suppose the world brought diadems
To tempt us, crusted with loose

Of powers and pleasures? Let it try.
We scarcely care to look at even
A pretty child, or God's blue
heaven,

We feel so tired, my heart and I.

VII

Yet who complains? My heart and I?

In this abundant earth no doubt Is little room for things worn out: Disdain them, break them, throw them by

And if before the days grew rough We once were loved, used,—well enough.

I think, we've fared, my heart and I.

THE BEST THING IN THE WORLD

What's the best thing in the world? June rose, by May dew impearled; Sweet south wind, that means no rain;

Truth, not cruel to a friend; Pleasure, not in haste to end; Beauty, not self-decked and curled Till its pride is over plain; Light, that never makes you wink; Memory, that gives no pain; Love, when, so, you're loved again. What's the best thing in the world?—Something out of it, I think.

WHERE'S AGNES?

1

NAY, if I had come back so, And found her dead in her grave, And if a friend I know Had said, "Be strong, nor rave:

She lies there, dead below:

II

"I saw her, I who speak,
White, stiff, the face one blank:
The blue shade came to her cheek
Before they nailed the plank,
For she had been dead a week."

III

Why, if he had spoken so, I might have believed the thing, Although her look, although Her step, laugh, voice's ring Lived in me still as they do.

TV

But dead that other way,
Corrupted thus and lost?
That sort of worm in the clay?
I cannot count the cost,
That I should rise and pay.

v

My Agnes false? such shame? She? Rather be it said That the pure saint of her name Has stood there in her stead, And tricked you to this blame.

VI

Her very gown, her cloak
Fell chastely: no disguise,
But expression! while she broke
With her clear grey morning-eyes
Full upon me and then spoke.

VII

She wore her hair away
From her forehead,—like a cloud
Which a little wind in May
Peels off finely: disallowed
Though bright enough to stay.

VIII

For the heavens must have the place To themselves, to use and shine in, As her soul would have her face To press through upon mine, in That orb of angel grace.

TX

Had she any fault at all,
'Twas having none, I thought too—
There seemed a sort of thrall;
As she felt her shadow ought to
Fall straight upon the wall.

Her sweetness strained the sense Of common life and duty; And every day's expense Of moving in such beauty Required, almost, defence.

What good, I thought, is done
By such sweet things, if any?
This world smells ill i' the sun

Though the garden-flowers are many,—
She is only one.

XII

Can a voice so low and soft
Take open actual part
With Right,—maintain aloft
Pure truth in life or art,
Vexed always, wounded oft?—

XIII

She fit, with that fair pose
Which melts from curve to curve,
To stand, run, work with those
Who wrestle and deserve,
And speak plain without gloze?

XIV

But I turned round on my fear Defiant, disagreeing— What if God has set her here Less for action than for Being?— For the eye and for the ear.

xv

Just to show what beauty may,
Just to prove what music can,—
And then to die away
From the presence of a man,
Who shall learn, henceforth, to pray?

XVI

As a door, left half ajar
In heaven, would make him think
How heavenly-different are
Things glanced at through the
chink,
Till he pined from near to far.

XVII

That door could lead to hell? That shining merely meant Damnation? What! She fell *Like a woman, who was sent Like an angel, by a spell?

XVIII

She, who scarcely trod the earth,
Turned mere dirt? My Agnes,—
mine!

Called so! felt of too much worth

To be used so! too divine

To be breathed near, and so forth!

Why, I dared not name a sin
In her presence: I went round,
Clipped its name and shut it in
Some mysterious crystal sound,—
Changed the dagger for the pin.

xx

Now you name herself that word? O my Agnes! O my saint! Then the great joys of the Lord Do not last? Then all this paint Runs off nature? leaves a board?

XXI

Who's dead here? No, not she: Rather I! or whence this damp Cold corruption's misery? While my very mourners stamp Closer in the clods on me.

XXII

And my mouth is full of dust
Till I cannot speak and curse—
Speak and damn him . . . " Blame's
unjust"?
Sin blots out the universe,
All because she would and must?

XXIII

She, my white rose, dropping off
The high rose tree branch! and not
That the night wind blew too rough,
Or the noon sun burnt too hot,
But, that being a rose—'twas enough!

XXIV

Then henceforth, may earth grow trees!
No more roses!—hard straight lines
To score lies out! none of these
Fluctuant curves, but firs and pines,
Poplars, cedars, cypresses!

DE PROFUNDIS

THE face which, duly as the sun,
Rose up for me with life begun,
To mark all bright hours of the day
With hourly love, is dimmed away,—
And yet my days go on, go on.

The tongue which, like a stream, could run
Smooth music from the roughest

stone

And every morning with "Good day" Make each day good, is hushed away,— And yet my days go on, go on.

III

The heart which, like a staff, was one For mine to lean and rest upon, The strongest on the longest day With steadfast love, is caught away,—And yet my days go on, go on.

IV

And cold before my summer's done, And deaf in Nature's general tune, And fallen too low for special fear, And here, with hope no longer here,— While the tears drop, my days go on.

v

The world goes whispering to its own, "This anguish pierces to the bone;" And tender friends go sighing round, "What love can ever cure this wound?"

My days go on, my days go on.

VI

The past rolls forward on the sun And makes all night. O dreams begun.

Not to be ended! Ended bliss, And life that will not end in this! My days go on, my days go on.

VII

Breath freezes on my lips to moan: As one alone, once not alone, I sit and knock at Nature's door, Heart-bare, heart-hungry, very poor, Whose desolated days go on.

VIII

I knock and cry,—Undone, undone! Is there no help, no comfort,—none? No gleaning in the wide wheat-plains Where others drive their loaded wains?

My vacant days go on, go on.

IX

This Nature, though the snows be down,

Thinks kindly of the bird of June: The little red hip on the tree Is ripe for such. What is for me, Whose days so winterly go on?

No bird am I, to sing in June, And dare not ask an equal boon. Good nests and berries red are Na-

To give away to better creatures,—And yet my days go on, go on.

XI

I ask less kindness to be done,—
Only to loose these pilgrim-shoon,
(Too early worn and grimed) with
sweet

Cool deathly touch to these tired feet, Till days go out which now go on.

XII

Only to lift the turf unmown
From off the earth where it has grown,
Some cubit-space, and say "Behold,
Creep in, poor Heart, beneath that
fold,

Forgetting how the days go on."

IIIX

What harm would that do? Green anon

The sward would quicken, overshone By skies as blue; and crickets might Have leave to chirp there day and night

While my new rest went on, went on.

XIV

From gracious Nature have I won Such liberal bounty? may I run So, lizard-like, within her side, And there be safe, who now am tried By days that painfully go on?

xv

—A Voice reproves me thereupon, More sweet than Nature's when the drone

Of bees is sweetest, and more deep Than when the rivers overleap The shuddering pines, and thunder on

God's Voice, not Nature's! Night

and noon
He sits upon the great white throne
And listens for the creatures' praise.
What babble we of days and days?
The Day-spring He, whose days go

XVII

He reigns above, He reigns alone; Systems burn out and leave His throne:

Fair mists of seraphs melt and fall Around Him, changeless amid all,—Ancient of Days, whose days go on.

XVIII

He reigns below, He reigns alone, And, having life in love forgone Beneath the crown of sovran thorns, He reigns the Jealous God. Who mourns

Or rules with Him, while days go on?

VIV

By anguish which made pale the sun, I hear Him charge His saints that none

Among His creatures anywhere Blaspheme against Him with despair, However darkly days go on.

XX

Take from my head the thorn-wreath brown!

No mortal grief deserves that crown. O supreme Love, chief misery, The sharp regalia are for Thee Whose days eternally go on!

XXI

For us,—whatever's undergone, Thou knowest, willest what is done, Grief may be joy misunderstood; Only the Good discerns the good. I trust Thee while my days go on.

XXII

Whatever's lost, it first was won:
We will not struggle nor impugn.
Perhaps the cup was broken here,
That Heaven's new wine might show
more clear.

I praise Thee while my days go on.

XXII

I praise Thee while my days go on; I love Thee while my days go on: Through dark and dearth, through fire and frost,

With emptied arms and treasure lost, I thank Thee while my days go on.

XXIV

And having in Thy life-depth thrown Being and suffering (which are one), As a child drops his pebble small Down some deep well, and hears it fall Smifing—so I. Thy days go on.

A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT

1

What was he doing, the great god Pan,

Down in the reeds by the river? Spreading ruin and scattering ban, Splashing and paddling with hoofs of a goat,

And breaking the golden lilies afloat With the dragon-fly on the river.

II

He tore out a reed, the great god Pan, From the deep cool bed of the river:

The limpid water turbidly ran, And the broken lilies a-dying lay, And the dragon-fly had fled away,

Ere he brought it out of the river.

TTT

High on the shore sat the great god Pan

While turbidly flowed the river; And hacked and hewed as a great god

With his hard bleak steel at the patient reed,

Till there was not a sign of the leaf indeed

To prove it fresh from the river.

IV

He cut it short, did the great god Pan,
(How tall it stood in the river!)
Then drew the pith, like the heart of
a man,

Steadily from the outside ring,
And notched the poor dry empty
thing

In holes, as he sat by the river.

"This is the way," laughed the great god Pan

(Laughed while he sat by the river),
"The only way, since gods began
To make sweet music, they could succeed."

Then, dropping his mouth to a hole in the reed,

He blew in power by the river.

VI

Sweet, sweet, weet, O Pan!
Piercing sweet by the river!
Blinding sweet, O great god Pan!
The sun on the hill forgot to die,
And the lilies revived, and the dragonfly
Came back to dream on the river.

VII

Yet half a beast is the great god Pan, To laugh as he sits by the river, Making a poet out of a man:

The true gods sigh for the cost and pain,—

For the reed which grows nevermore again

As a reed with the reeds in the

river.

FIRST NEWS FROM VILLA-FRANCA

Peace, peace, peace, do you say? What !-with the enemy's guns in our ears?

With the country's wrong not ren-

dered back?

What !-while Austria stands at bay In Mantua, and our Venice bears The cursed flag of the yellow and black?

Peace, peace, peace, do you say? And this the Mincio? Where's the fleet.

And where's the sea? Are we all blind

Or mad with the blood shed yesterday, Ignoring Italy under our feet, And seeing things before, behind?

Peace, peace, peace, do you say? What !—uncontested, undenied? Because we triumph, we succumb?

A pair of Emperors stand in the way (One of whom is a man, beside), To sign and seal our cannons dumb?

No, not Napoleon !—he who mused At Paris, and at Milan spake, And at Solferino led the fight:

Not he we trusted, honoured, used Our hopes and hearts for . . . till they break-

Even so, you tell us . . . in his sight.

Peace, peace, is still your word? We say you lie then !—that is plain. There is no peace, and shall be

Our very Dead would cry "Absurd!" And clamour that they died in vain, And whine to come back to the sun.

Hush! more reverence for the Dead! They've done the most for Italy Evermore since the earth was fair. Now would that we had died instead,

Still dreaming peace meant liberty, And did not, could not mean despair.

Peace, you say?-yes, peace, in truth!

But such a peace as the ear can achieve

'Twixt the rifle's click and the rush of the ball.

'Twixt the tiger's spring and the crunch of the tooth,

'Twixt the dying atheist's negative And God's Face—waiting, after all

KING VICTOR EMANUEL ENTERING FLORENCE, APRIL, 1860

King of us all, we cried to thee, cried to thee.

Trampled to earth by the beasts impure,

Dragged by the chariots which shame as they roll:

The dust of our torment far and wide to thee

Went up, dark'ning thy royal soul. Be witness, Cavour,

That the King was sad for the people in thrall.

This King of us all!

King, we cried to thee! Strong in replying, Thy word and thy sword sprang

rapid and sure,

Cleaving our way to a nation's place.

Oh, first soldier of Italy !-crying Now grateful, exultant, we look in thy face.

Be witness, Cavour, That, freedom's first soldier, the freed should call

First King of them all!

This is our beautiful Italy's birthday: High-thoughted souls, whether many or fewer,

Bring her the gift, and wish her the good,

While Heaven presents on this sunny earth-day

The noble King to the land renewed:

Be witness, Cavou#!

Roar, cannon-mouths! Proclaim, install

The King of us all!

IV

Grave he rides through the Florence gateway.

Clenching his face into calm, to immure

His struggling heart till it half disappears;

If he relaxed for a moment, straight-

He would break out into passionate tears—

(Be witness, Cavour!)

While rings the cry without interval, "Live, King of us all!"

Cry, free peoples! Honour the nation

By crowning the true man—and none is truer:

Pisa is here, and Livorno is here, And thousands of faces, in wild

exultation,

Burn over the windows to feel him

Burn over the windows to feel him near—

(Be witness, Cavour!)

Burn over from terrace, roof, window and wall, .
On this King of us all.

VI

Grave! A good man's ever the graver

For bearing a nation's trust secure; And he, he thinks of the Heart, beside,

Which broke for Italy, failing to save her,

And pining away by Oporto's tide:
Be witness, Cavour,

That he thinks of his vow on that royal pall,

This King of us all.

VII

Flowers, flowers, from the flowery city!

Such innocent thanks for a deed so pure,

As, melting away for joy into flowers,

The nation invites him to enter his Pitti

And evermore reign in this Florence of ours.

Be witness, Cavour!

He'll stand where the reptiles were used to crawl,

This King of us all.

VIII

Grave, as the manner of noble men is— Deeds unfinished will weigh on the doer:

And, baring his head to those crape-veiled flags,

He bows to the grief of the South and Venice.

Oh, riddle the last of the yellow to

And swear by Cavour

That the King shall reign where the tyrants fall,

True King of us all!

THE SWORD OF CASTRUCCIO CASTRACANI

'Questa è per me."—King Victor Emanuel

WHEN Victor Emanuel the King

Went down to his Lucca that day,
The people, each vaunting the thing
As he gave it, gave all things away,
In a burst of fierce gratitude, say,

As they tore out their hearts for the King.

İI

—Gave the green forest-walk on the wall,

With the Apennine blue through the trees;

Gave the palaces, churches, and all
The great pictures which burn out
of these:

But the eyes of the King seemed to freeze

As he gazed upon ceiling and wall.

III

"Good," said the King as he passed.
Was he cold to the arts?—or else

To possession? or crossed, at the last (Whispered some), by the vote in Savoy?

Shout! Love him enough for his joy!

"Good," said the King as he passed.

IV

He, travelling the whole day through flowers

And protesting amenities, found At Pistoia, betwixt the two showers Of red roses, the "Orphans" (re-

As the heirs of Puccini) who wound

With a sword through the crowd and the flowers.

v

"Tis the sword of Castruccio, O King,—

In that strife of intestinal hate, Very famous! Accept what we bring,

We who cannot be sons, by our fate, Rendered citizens by thee of late,

And endowed with a country and king.

VI

"Read! Puccini has willed that this sword

(Which once made in an ignorant feud

Many orphans) remain in our ward Till some patriot its pure civic blood

Wipe away in the foe's and make good,

In delivering the land by the sword."

VIII

Then the King exclaimed "This is for me!"

And he dashed out his hand on the hilt.

While his blue eye shot fire openly, And his heart overboiled till it spilt A hot prayer,—"God! the rest as Thou wilt!

But grant me this !—This is for me."

VIII

O Victor Emanuel, the King, The sword be for *thee*, and the deed, And nought for the alien, next spring, Nought for Hapsburg and Bourbon agreed— But, for us, a great Italy freed,

With a hero to head us, -our King!

SUMMING UP IN ITALY

(INSCRIBED TO INTELLIGENT PUBLICS OUT OF IT.)

I v it will be at last.

Observe how it will be at last, When our Italy stands at full stature,

A year ago tied down so fast

That the cord cut the quick of her nature!

You'll honour the deed and its scope,
Then, in logical sequence upon it,
Will use up the remnants of rope

By hanging the men who have done it.

II

The speech in the Commons, which hits you

A sketch off, how dungeons must feel,—

The official despatch, which commits you

From stamping out groans with your heel,—

Suggestions in journal or book for Good efforts,—are praised as is meet:

But what in this world can men look for,
Who only achieve and complete?

Who only achieve and complete?

11.

True, you've praise for the fireman who sets his

Brave face to the axe of the flame, Disappears in the smoke, and then fetches

A babe down, or idiot that's lame,— For the boor even, who rescues through pity

A sheep from the brute who would kick it:

But saviours of nations!—'tis pretty,
And doubtful: they may be so
wicked:

IV

Azeglio, Farini, Mamiani, Ricasoli,—doubt by the dozen! here's

Pepoli too, and Cipriani,

Imperial cousins and cozeners—Arese, Laiatico,—courtly

Of manners, if stringent of mouth: Garibaldi! we'll come to him shortly (As soon as he *ends* in the South).

v

Napoleon—as strong as ten armies, Corrupt as seven devils—a fact You accede to, then seek where the

Drained off from the man to his act, And find—a free nation! Suppose

Some hell-brood in Eden's sweet greenery,

Convoked for creating—a rose!
Would it suit the infernal machinery?

VI

Cavour,—to the despot's desire, Who his own thought so craftily marries—

What is he but just a thin wire For conducting the lightning from Paris?

Yes, write down the two as compeers, Confessing (you would not permit a lie)

He bore up his Piedmont ten years
Till she suddenly smiled and was
Italy.

171

And the King, with that "stain on his scutcheon," 1

Savoy—as the calumny runs;

(If it be not his blood,—with his clutch on
The sword, and his face to the

guns.)
first, where the battle-storm

gathers, O loyal of heart on the throne,

Let those keep the "graves of their fathers,"

Who quail, in a nerve, from their own!

For thee—through the dim Hadesportal

The dream of a voice—" Blessed thou

Who hast made all thy race twice immortal!

No need of the sepulchres now!

—Left to Bourbons and Hapsburgs,
who fester

Above-ground with worm-eaten souls,

While the ghost of some pale feudal jester

Blue Book: Diplomatical Correspondence.

Before them strews treaties in holes."

IX

But hush!—am I dreaming a poem
Of Hades, Heaven, Justice? Not
I—

I began too far off, in my proem,

With what men believe and deny: And on earth, whatsoever the need is (To sum up as thoughtful reviewers).

The moral of every great deed is—
The virtue of slandering the doers.

" DIED . . ."

(" The Times" Obituary)

1

What shall we add now? He is dead.

And I who praise and you who blame.

With wash of words across his name,

Find suddenly declared instead—
"On Sunday, third of August, dead."

11

Which stops the whole we talked today.

I, quickened to a plausive glance At his large general tolerance By common people's narrow way, Stopped short in praising. Dead, they say.

III

And you, who had just put in a sort Of cold deduction—"rather, large Through weakness of the continent marge,

Than greatness of the thing contained "—

Broke off. Dead!—there, you stood restrained.

IV

As if we had talked in following one
Up some long gallery. "Would
you choose

An air like that? The gait is loose—

Or noble." Sudden in the sun An oubliette winks. Where is he? Gone. Dead. Man's "I was" by God's
"I am"—

All hero-worship comes to that.

High heart, high thought, high
fame, as flat

As a gravestone. Bring your Jacet jam—

The epitaph's an epigram.

VI

Dead. There's an answer to arrest
All carping. Dust's his natural
place?
He'll let the flies buzz round his

face

And, though you slander, not protest?
—From such an one, exact the Best?

VII

Opinions gold or brass are null.

We chuck our flattery or abuse,
Called Cæsar's due, as Charon's
dues,

I' the teeth of some dead sage or fool, To mend the grinning of a skull.

VIII

Be abstinent in praise and blame. The man's still mortal, who stands first,

And mortal only, if last and worst. Then slowly lift so frail a fame, Or softly drop so poor a shame.

THE FORCED RECRUIT (Solferino, 1859)

Ι

In the ranks of the Austrian you found him,

He died with his face to you all; Yet bury him here where around him You honour your bravest that fall.

11

Venetian, fair-featured and slender, He lies shot to death in his youth, With a smile on his lips over-tender For any mere soldier's dead mouth.

III

No stranger, and yet not a traitor, Though alien the cloth on his breast, Underneath it how seldom a greater Young heart has a shot sent to rest!

By your enemy tortured and goaded

To march with them, stand in their file.

His musket (see) never was loaded, He facing yourguns with that smile!

As orphans yearn on to their mothers.

He yearned to your patriot bands;—
"Let me die for our Italy, brothers,
If not in your ranks, by your
hands!

W

"Aim straightly, fire steadily! spare

A ball in the body which may Deliver my heart here, and tear me This badge of the Austrian away!"

VII

So thought he, so died he this morn-

What then? many others have died.

Ay, but easy for men to die scorning The death-stroke, who fought side by side—

VIII

One tricolor floating above them; Struck down 'mid triumphant acclaims

Of an Italy rescued to love them
And blazon the brass with their
names.

TV

But he,—without witness or honour, Mixed, shamed in his country's regard,

With the tyrants who march in upon her,

Died faithful and passive: 'twas hard.

X

'Twas sublime. In a cruel restriction Cut off from the guerdon of sons, With most filial obedience, conviction,

His soul kissed the lips of her guns.

ХI

That moves you? Nay, grudge not to show it,

While digging a grave for him here:

The others who died, says your poet, Have glory,—let him have a tear.

GARIBALDI

ľ

He bent his head upon his breast
Wherein his lion-heart lay sick:
"Perhaps we are not ill-repaid;"

Perhaps this is not a true test; Perhaps this was not a foul trick; Perhaps none wronged, and none betrayed.

TT

"Perhaps the people's vote which here

United, there may disunite,

And both be lawful as they think; Perhaps a patriot, statesman, dear For chartering pations, can with

For chartering nations, can with right Disfranchise those who hold the

ink.

III

"Perhaps men's wisdom is not craft; Men's greatness, not a selfish greed; Men's justice, not the safer side;

Perhaps even women, when they laughed,

Wept, thanked us that the land was freed,

Not wholly (though they kissed us) lied.

TV

"Perhaps no more than this we meant.

When up at Austria's guns we flew, And quenched them with a cry apiece.

Italia !—Yet a dream was sent . . . The little house my father knew, The olives and the palms of Nice."

. .

He paused, and drew his sword out slow,

Then pored upon the blade intent, As if to read some written thing; While many murmured,—"He will

In that despairing sentiment And break his sword before the King."

VI

He poring still upon the blade, His large lid quivered, something fell.

"Perhaps," he said, "I was not born

With such fine brains to treat and trade,—

And if a woman knew it well, Her falsehood only meant her scorn.

37TT

"Yet through Varese's cannonsmoke

My eye saw clear: men feared this

At Como, where this sword could seal

Death's protocol with every stroke:
And now...the drop there scarcely can

Impair the keenness of the steel.

VIII

"So man and sword may have their use;

And if the soil beneath my foot In valour's act is forfeited,

I'll strike the harder, take my dues Out nobler, and all loss confute From ampler heavens above my head.

X

"My King, King Victor, I am thine!
So much Nice-dust as what I am
(To make our Italy) must cleave.
Forgive that." Forward with a sign
He went.

You've seen the telegram? Palermo's taken, we believe.

ONLY A CURL

1

FRIENDS of faces unknown and a land Unvisited over the sea,

Who tell me how lonely you stand With a single gold curl in the hand Held up to be looked at by me,—

TT

While you ask me to ponder and say What a father and mother can do, With the bright fellow-locks put

Out of reach, beyond kiss, in the clay Where the violets press nearer than you:

777

Shall I speak like a poet, or run
Into weak woman's tears for relief?
Oh, children!—I never lost one,—

Yet my arm's round my own little son,

And Love knows the secret of Grief.

TV

And I feel what it must be and is,
When God draws a new angel so
Through the house of a man up to
His,

With a murmur of music, you miss, And a rapture of light, you forgo.

v

How you think, staring on at the door.

Where the face of your angel flashed in.

That its brightness, familiar before, Burns off from you ever the more For the dark of your sorrow and

sin.

VI

"God lent him and takes him," you sigh;

—Nay, there let me break with your pain:

God's generous in giving, say I,— And the thing which He gives, I deny That He ever can take back again.

VII

He gives what He gives. I appeal To all who bear babes—in the hour When the veil of the body we feel Rent round us,—while torments reveal

The motherhood's advent in power,

VIII

And the babe cries!—has each of us known

By apocalypse (God being there Full in nature) the child is our own, Life of life, love of love, moan of moan, Through all changes, all times, everywhere.

TX

He's ours and for ever. Believe,
O father!—O mother, look back
To the first love's assurance! To
give

Means with God not to tempt or deceive

With a cup thrust in Benjamin's sack.

x

He gives what He gives. Be con-

He resumes nothing given,—be sure!

God lend? Where the usurers lent In His temple, indignant He went

And scourged away all those impure.

XI

He lends not; but gives to the end, As He loves to the end. If it seem That He draws back a gift, comprehend

Tis to add to it rather,—amend,
And finish it up to your dream,—

XII

Or keep,—as a mother will toys
Too costly, though given by herself,
Till the room shall be stiller from
noise.

And the children more fit for such

loys, Kept over their heads on the shelf.

XIII

So look up, friends I you, who indeed Have possessed in your house a sweet piece

Of the Heaven which men strive for, must need

Be more earnest than others are,—speed

Where they loiter, persist where they cease.

XIV

You know how one angel smiles there. Then weep not. Tis easy for you To be drawn by a single gold hair Of that curl, from earth's storm and

despair;
To the safe place above us. Adieu.

A VIEW ACROSS THE ROMAN CAMPAGNA

(1861)

1

Over the dumb Campagna-sea, Out in the offing through mist and rain,

Saint Peter's Church heaves silently Like a mighty ship in pain,

Facing the tempest with struggle and strain.

Motionless waifs of ruined towers, Soundless breakers of desolate land: What bird comes next in the tempest The sullen surf of the mist devours

That mountain-range upon either

Eaten away from its outline grand.

And over the dumb Campagna-sea Where the ship of the Church heaves on to wreck,

Alone and silent as God must be, The Christ walks. Ay, but Peter's

Is stiff to turn on the foundering deck.

Peter, Peter! if such be thy name, Now leave the ship for another to steer.

And proving thy faith evermore the

Come forth, tread out through the dark and drear.

Since He who walks on the sea is here.

Peter, Peter! He does not speak; He is not as rash as in old Galilee: Safer a ship, though it toss and leak, Than a reeling foot on a rolling sea! And he's got to be round in the girth, thinks he.

Peter, Peter! He does not stir; His nets are heavy with silver fish; He reckons his gains, and is keen to

"The broil on the shore, if the Lord should wish; But the sturgeon goes to the Cæsar's

dish."

Peter, Peter! thou fisher of men, Fisher of fish wouldst thou live instead?

Haggling for pence with the other

Cheating the market at so much a

Griping the Bag of the traitor Dead?

At the triple crow of the Gallic cock

Thou weep'st not, thou, though thine eves be dazed:

shock?

-Vultures! see, -as when Romulus gazed,— To inaugurate Rome for a world

amazed!

THE KING'S GIFT

Teresa, ah, Teresita! Now what has the messenger brought

Our Garibaldi's young daughter,

To make her stop short in her singing?

Will she not once more repeat a Verse from that hymn of our hero's, Setting the souls of us ringing?

Break off the song where the tear rose?

Ah, Teresita!

A young thing, mark, is Teresa: Her eyes have caught fire, to be sure,

That necklace of jewels from Turin, Till blind their regard to us men is. But still she remembers to raise a Sly look to her father, and note— "Could she sing on as well about

Venice.

Yet wear such a flame at her throat? Decide for Teresa."

Teresa, ah, Teresita! His right hand has paused on her head-

"Accept it, my daughter," he said; "Ay, wear it, true child of thy mother!

Then sing, till all start to their feet, a New verse ever bolder and freer !

King Victor's no king like another, But verily noble as we are,

Child, Teresita!"

PARTING LOVERS

(SIENA, 1860)

I LOVE thee, love thee, Giulio; Some call me cold, and some deAnd if thou hast ever guessed that so I loved thee . . . well, the proof was poor

And no one could be sure.

Before thy song (with shifted rhymes To suit my name) did I undo The persian? If it stirred sometimes,

Thou hast not seen a hand push through

A foolish flower or two.

My mother listening to my sleep, Heard nothing but a sigh at night,-The short sigh rippling on the deep,

When hearts run out of breath and sight

Of men, to God's clear light.

When others named thee,—thought thy brows

Were straight, thy smile was tender,-" Here

He comes between the vineyard-rows!"

I said not "Ay," nor waited, Dear, To feel thee step too near.

I left such things to bolder girls,— Olivia or Clotilda. Nay,

When that Clotilda, through her curls. Held both thine eyes in hers one

I marvelled, let me say.

I could not try the woman's trick: Between us straightway fell the blush

Which kept me separate, blind and

A wind came with thee in a flush, As blown through Sinai's bush.

But now that Italy invokes

Her young men to go forth and chase

The foe or perish, -nothing chokes My voice, or drives me from the place.

I look thee in the face.

I love thee! It is understood, Confest: I do not shrink or start. No blushes! all my body's blood Has gone to greaten this poor heart. That, loving, we may part.

Our Italy invokes the youth To die if need be. Still there's

Though earth is strained with dead in truth:

Since twice the lilies were in bloom They have not grudged a tomb.

And many a plighted maid and wife And mother, who can say since then " My country,"-cannot say through life

"My son," "my spouse," "my

flower of men,

And not weep dumb again.

Heroic males the country bears,-But daughters give up more than sons:

Flags wave, drums beat, and una-

You flash your souls out with the

And take your Heaven at once.

But we !—we empty heart and home Of life's life, love! We bear to think

You're gone,—to feel you may not come,-

To hear the door-latch stir and

Yet no more you! . . . nor sink. XIII

Dear God! when Italy is one,

Complete, content from bound to bound,

Suppose, for my share, earth's undone By one grave in't !--as one small

Will kill a man, 'tis found.

What then? If love's delight must end.

At least we'll clear its truth from flaws.

I love thee, love thee, sweetest friend! Now take my sweetest without pause.

And help the nation's cause.

VV

And thus, of noble Italy

We'll both be worthy! Let her show

The future how we made her free, Not sparing life . . . nor Giulio, Northis . . . this heartbreak!

MOTHER AND POET

(Turin, after news from Gaeta, 1861)

DEAD! One of them shot by the sea in the east,

And one of them shot in the west by the sea.

Dead! both my boys! When you sit at the feast

And are wanting a great song for Italy free,

Let none look at me!

II

Yet I was a poetess only last year, And good at my art, for a woman, men said;

But *this* woman, *this*, who is agonised here,

—The east sea and west sea rhyme on in her head For ever instead

TIT

What art can a woman be good at?
Oh, vain!
What art is she good at, but hurt-

ing her breast
Withouthe milk-teeth of babes, and o

With the milk-teeth of babes, and a smile at the pain?

Ah boys, how you hurt! you were strong as you pressed,
And I proud, by that test.

IV

What art's for a woman? To hold on her knees

Both darlings! to feel all their arms round her throat,

Cling, strangle a little! to sew by degrees

And 'broider the long-clothes and neat little coat;

To dream and to doat.

To teach them . . . It stings there!

I made them indeed

Speak plain the word country. I taught them, no doubt,

That a country's a thing men should die for at need.

I prated of liberty, rights, and about The tyrant cast out.

VI

And when their eyes flashed . . . O my beautiful eyes! . . .

I exulted; nay, let them go forth at the wheels

Of the guns, and denied not. But then the surprise

When one sits quite alone! Then one weeps, then one kneels!
God, how the house feels!

VII

At first, happy news came, in gay letters moiled

With my kisses,—of camp-life and glory, and how

They both loved me; and, soon coming home to be spoiled,

In return would fan off every fly from my brow

With their green laurel-bough.

Then was triumph at Turin: "Ancona was free!"

And someone came out of the cheers in the street,

With a face pale as stone, to say something to me.

My Guido was dead! I fell down at his feet,

While they cheered in the street.

7.37

I bore it; friends soothed me; my grief looked sublime

As the ransom of Italy. One boy remained

To be leant on and walked with, recalling the time

When the first grew immortal, while both of us strained To the height he had gained.

x

And letters still came, shorter, sadder, more strong,

Writ now but in one hand, "I was not to faint,—

One loved me for two-would be with me ere long:

And Viva l'Italia!—he died for. our saint,

Who forbids our complaint."

My Nanni would add, "he was safe, and aware

Of a presence that turned off the balls,—was imprest

It was Guido himself, who knew what I could bear,

And how 'twas impossible, quite dispossessed,

To live on for the rest."

On which, without pause, up the telegraph-line

Swept smoothly the next news

from Gaeta:—Shot.
Tell his mother. Ah, ah, "his," "their" mother,—not "mine," No voice says " My mother " again to me. What! You think Guido forgot?

Are souls straight so happy that, dizzy with Heaven,

They drop earth's affections, conceive not of woe?

I think not. Themselves were too lately forgiven

Through THAT Love and Sorrow which reconciled so The Above and Below.

O Christ of the five wounds, Who look'dst through the dark

To the face of Thy mother! consider, I pray,

How we common mothers stand desolate, mark.

Whose sons, not being Christs, die with eyes turned away, And no last word to say!

Both boys dead? but that's out of

nature. We all Have been patriots, yet each house must always keep one.

'Twere imbecile, hewing out roads to a wall;

And, when Italy's made, for what end is it done

If we have not a son?

Ah, ah, ah! when Gaeta's taken, what then?

When the fair wicked queen sits no more at her sport

Of the fire-balls of death crashing souls out of men? When the guns of Cavalli with final

retort

Have cut the game short?

XVII

When Venice and Rome keep their new jubilee,

When your flag takes all heaven for its white, green and red,

When you have your country from mountain to sea,

When King Victor has Italy's crown on his head, (And I have my Dead)—

What then? Do not mock me. Ah, ring your bells low,

And burn your lights faintly ! My country is there,

Above the star pricked by the last peak of snow:

My Italy's THERE, with my brave civic Pair,

To disfranchise despair!

Forgive me. Some women bear children in strength,

And bite back the cry of their pain in self-scorn;

But the birth-pangs of nations will wring us at length

Into wail such as this-and we sit on forlorn

When the man-child is born

Dead! One of them shot by the sea in the east.

And one of them shot in the west by the sea.

Both! both my boys! If in keeping the feast

You want a great song for your Italy free,

Let none look at me!

[This was Laura Savio, of Turin, a poetess and patriot, whose sons were killed at Ancona and Greta.]

NATURE'S REMORSES (ROME, 1861)

HER soul was bred by a throne, and fed From the sucking-bottle used in her race

On starch and water (for mother's

milk

Which gives a larger growth instead), And, out of the natural liberal grace,

Was swaddled away in violet silk.

- 11

And young and kind, and royally blind,

Forth she stepped from her palacedoor

On three-piled carpet of compliments,

Curtains of incense drawn by the wind

In between her for evermore And daylight issues of events.

III

On she drew, as a queen might do,
To meet a Dream of Italy,—
Of magical town and musical
wave,

Where even a god, his amulet blue Of shining sea, in an ecstasy Dropt and forgot in a Nereid's cave.

IV

Down she goes, as the soft wind blows, To live more smoothly than mortals can,

To love and to reign as queen and wife,

To wear a crown that smells of a rose, And still, with a sceptre as light as

Beat sweet time to the song of life.

v

What is this? As quick as a kiss
Falls the smile from her girlish
mouth!

The lion-people has left its lair,
Roaring along her garden of bliss,
And the fiery underworld of the
South

Scorched a way to the upper air.

VI

And a fire-stone ran in the form of a man,

Burningly, boundingly, fatal and fell.

Bowling the kingdom down! Where was the King?

She had heard somewhat, since life began,

Of terrors on earth and horrors in hell,

But never, never of such a thing.

VII

You think she dropped when her dream was stopped,

When the blotch of Bourbon blood inlay,

Lividly rank, her new lord's cheek?

Not so. Her high heart overtopped The royal part she had come to play. Only the men in that hour were weak.

VIII

And twice a wife by her ravaged life, And twice a queen by her kingdom lost,

She braved the shock and the counter-shock

Of hero and traitor, bullet and knife, While Italy pushed, like a vengeful ghost,

That son of the Cursed from Gaeta's rock.

τx

What will ye give her, who could not deliver,

German Princesses? A laurelwreath

All over-scored with your signatures,

Graces, Serenities, Highnesses ever?

Mock her not, fresh from the truth
of Death.

Conscious of dignities higher than yours.

x

What will ye put in your casket shut, Ladies of Paris, in sympathy's name?

Guizot's daughter, what have you brought her?

Withered immortelles, long ago cut For guilty dynasties perished in shame.

Putrid to memory, Guizot's daughter?

Ah poor queen! so young and serene! What shall we do for her, now hope's done,

Standing at Rome in these ruins

She too a ruin and no more a queen? Leave her that diadem made by the sun

> Turning her hair to an innocent gold.

Ay! bring close to her, as 'twere a rose, to her,

Yon free child from an Apennine city Singing for Italy,—dumb in the

place! Something like solace, let us suppose,

to her Given, in that homage of wonder

> and pity, By his pure eyes to her beautiful face.

Nature, excluded, savagely brooded, Ruined all queendom and dogmas of state.-

Then in reaction remorseful and mild.

Rescues the womanhood, nearly eluded.

Shows her what's sweetest in womanly fate-

Sunshine from Heaven, and the eyes of a child.

THE NORTH AND THE SOUTH [THE LAST POEM]

ROME, MAY, 1861

" Now give us lands where the olives grow.'

Cried the North to the South, "Where the sun with a golden mouth can blow

Blue bubbles of grapes down a vinevard-row!'

Cried the North to the South. " Now give us men from the sunless

plain," Cried the South to the North,

"By need of work in the snow and the Loved Galatea while the manhood

Made strong, and brave by familiar pain!

Cried the South to the North.

"Give lucider hills and intenser seas,"

Said the North to the South, "Since ever by symbols and bright degrees

Art, childlike, climbs to the dear

Lord's knees." Said the North to the South

"Give strenuous souls for belief and prayer,"

Said the South to the North. "That stand in the dark on the lowes:

While affirming of God, 'He is certainly there,'"

Said the South to the North.

"Yet oh, for the skies that are softer and higher!"

Sighed the North to the South: " For the flowers that blaze, and the trees that aspire,

And the insects made of a song or a fire!"

Sighed the North to the South. " And oh, for a seer to discern the same!"

Sighed the South to the North': "For a poet's tongue of baptismal flame.

To call the tree or the flower by its name!"

Sighed the South to the North.

The North sent therefore a man of men As a grace to the South;

And thus to Rome came Andersen. -" Alas, but must you take him again?"

Said the South to the North.

TRANSLATIONS

PARAPHRASE ON THEOCRITUS

THE CYCLOPS

(IDYL XI)

And so an easier life our Cyclops drew. The ancient Polyphemus, who in vouth

grew

Adown his cheeks and darkened Thou wilt not care for that, to let it round his mouth.

No jot he cared for apples, olives, roses;

Love made him mad: the whole From my arm round thee. Why? world was neglected,

The very sheep went backward to their closes

self-directed.

And singing Galatea, thus, he

wound

Beneath his heart, which Cypris' arrow bore.

cure was found;

And sitting on a lofty rock he

His eyes upon the sea, and sang at last :--

"O whitest Galatea, can it be That thou shouldst spurn me off

who love thee so? More white than curds, my girl, thou

art to see. More meek than lambs, more full of

leaping glee Than kids, and brighter than the

early glow On grapes that swell to ripen,—sour

like thee! Thou comest to me with the fragrant

And with the fragrant sleep thou goest from me;

Thou fliest . . . fliest, as a frightened sheep

Flies the grey wolf !--yet Love did overcome me,

So long ;-I loved thee, maiden, first of all

When down the hills (my mother fast beside theel

I saw thee stray to pluck the summer-

Of hyacinth bells, and went myself to guide thee:

And since my eyes have seen thee, they can leave thee

But thou . . . by Zeus,

grieve thee!

I know thee, fair one, why thou springest loose

I tell thee, Dear!

One shaggy eyebrow draws its smudging road

From out the fair green pastures, Straight through my ample front, from ear to ear,-

One eye rolls underneath; and yawning, broad

The sunrise down along the weedy Flat nostrils feel the bulging lips too

And pined alone, and felt the cruel Yet . . . ho, ho!—I,—whatever I appear,-

Do feed a thousand oxen! When I have done,

With a deep pang; but, so, the I milk the cows, and drink the milk that's best!

I lack no cheese, while summer keeps the sun ;

And after, in the cold, it's ready prest! And then, I know to sing, as there is none

Of all the Cyclops can . . . a song of thee.

Sweep apple of my soul, on love's fair tree

And of myself who love thee . . . till the West

Forgets the light, and all but I have rest.

I feed for thee, besides, eleven fair does.

And all in fawn; and four tame whelps of bears.

Come to me, Sweet! thou shalt have all of those

In change for love! I will not halve the shares.

Leave the blue sea, with pure white arms extended

To the dry shore; and, in my cave's recess,

Thou shalt be gladder for the noonlight ended,-

For here be laurels, spiral cypresses, Dark ivy, and a vine whose leaves enfold

Most luscious grapes; and here is water cold.

The wooded Ætna pours down through the trees

No more, from that day's light! From the white snows,—which gods were scarce too bold

with these

Would choose the salt wave of the lukewarm seas?

Nav. look on me! If I am hairy and rough

I have an oak's heart in me: there's a fire

In these grey ashes which burns hot

And when I burn for thee. I grudge the pyre

No fuel . . . not my soul, nor this On turning bowls, or pulling green one eve.-

Most precious thing I have, because thereby

I see thee, Fairest! Out, alas! I wish My mother had borne me finnèd like

That I might plunge down in the ocean near thee.

And kiss thy glittering hand between the weeds.

If still thy face were turned: and I would bear thee

Each lily white, and poppy fair

that bleeds Its red heart down its leaves !-- one gift, for hours

Of summer,—one, for winter; since, to cheer thee,-

I could not bring at once all kinds of flowers.

Even now, girl, now, I fain would learn to swim.

If stranger in a ship sailed nigh, I wis .-

That I may know how sweet a thing

To live down with you, in the Deep and Dim!

Come up. O Galatea, from the ocean. And having come, forget again to go!

As I, who sing out here my heart's emotion.

Could sit for ever. Come up from below!

Come, keep my flocks beside me, milk my kine.-

Come, press my cheese, distrain my whey and curd!

Ah, mother! she alone . . . that mother of mine . .

Did wrong me sore! I blame her! -Not a word

To drink in turn with nectar. Who Of kindly intercession did she address Thine ear with for my sake: and ne'ertheless

> She saw me wasting, wasting, day by day!

Both head and feet were aching, I will say

All sick for grief, as I myself was sick! O Cyclops, Cyclops, whither hast thou sent

Thy soul on fluttering wings? If thou wert bent

and thick

The sprouts to give thy lambkins. -thou wouldst make thee

A wiser Cyclops than for what we take thee.

Milk dry the present! Why pursue too quick

That future which is fugitive aright? Thy Galatea thou shalt haply find.—

Or else a maiden fairer and more kind:

For many girls do call me through the night. And, as they call, do laugh out

silverly.

I, too, am something in the world. I see!"

While thus the Cyclops love and lambs did fold,

Ease came with song, he could not buy with gold.

PARAPHRASES ON APPLIFITIS

PSYCHE GAZING ON CUPID (METAMORPH., LIB. IV.)

THEN Psyche, weak in body and soul. put on

The cruelty of Fate, in place of strength:

She raised the lamp to see what should be done,

And seized the steel, and was a man at length

In courage, though a woman! Yes, but when,

The light fell on the bed whereby she stood

To view the "beast" that lay there, -certes, then,

She saw the gentlest, sweetest beast in wood—

Even Cupid's self, the beauteous god! more beauteous

For that sweet sleep across his eyelids dim!

The light, the lady carried as she viewed,

Did blush for pleasure as it lighted him,

The dagger trembled from its aim unduteous;
And she . . . oh, she—amazed and

soul-distraught, And fainting in her whiteness like a

And fainting in her whiteness like a veil,

Slid down upon her knees, and, shuddering, thought

To hide—though in her heart—the dagger pale!

She would have done it, but her hands did fail

To hold the guilty steel, they shivered so,—

And feeble, exhausted, unawares she took

To gazing on the god,—till, look by look,

Her eyes with larger life did fill and glow.

She saw his golden head alight with curls,—

She might have guessed their brightness in the dark

By that ambrosial smell of heavenly

By that ambrosial smell of heavenly mark!

She saw the milky brow, more pure than pearls,

The purple of the cheeks, divinely sundered

By the globed ringlets, as they glided free,

Some back, some forwards,—all so radiantly,

That, as she watched them there, she never wondered

To see the lamplight, where it touched them, tremble:

On the god's shoulders, too, she marked his wings Shine faintly at the edges and

resemble
A flower that's near to blow. The
poet sings

And lover sighs, that Love is fugitive;

And certes, though these pinions lay reposing,

The feathers on them seemed to stir and live

As if by instinct, closing and unclosing.

Meantime the god's fair body slumbered deep.

All worthy of Venus, in his shining sleep;

While at the bed's foot lay the quiver, bow,

And darts,—his arms of godhead.

Psyche gazed

With area that dead the later and the second arms.

With eyes that drank the wonders in,—said,—"Lo,

Be these my husband's arms?"—
and straightway raised

An arrow from the quiver-case, and tried

Its point against her finger,—trembling till

She pushed it in too deeply (foolish bride!)

And made her blood some dewdrops small distil,

And learnt to love Love, of her own good-will.

PSYCHE WAFTED BY ZEPHYRUS

(METAMORPH., LIB. IV.)

WHILE Psyche wept upon the rock forsaken,

Alone, despairing, dreading, gradually

By Zephyrus she was enwrapt and taken
Still trembling,—like the lilies

planted high,— Through all her fair white limbs.

Her very bosom eddying with

surprise,—

In draw her slowly from the moun-

He drew her slowly from the mountain-head,

And bore her down the valleys with wet eyes,

And laid her in the lap of a green dell As soft with grass and flowers as any nest,

With trees beside her, and a limpid well:

Yet Love was not far off from all that Rest.

PSYCHE AND PAN

(METAMORPH., LIB. V.) THE gentle River, in her Cupid's honour.

Because he used to warm the very

wave, Did ripple aside, instead of closing on

And cast up Psyche, with a refluence brave,

Upon the flowery bank,—all sad and sinning.

Then Pan, the rural god, by chance was leaning

Along the brow of waters as they wound,

Kissing the reed-nymph till she sank to ground,

And teaching, without knowledge of the meaning,

To run her voice in music after his Down many a shifting note; (the goats around,

In wandering pasture and most leaping bliss,

Drawn on to crop the river's flowery hair).

And as the hoary god beheld her there.

The poor, worn fainting Psyche!

-knowing all The grief she suffered, he did gently call

Her name, and softly comfort her despair:-

" O wise, fair lady, I am rough and

And yet experienced through my Touching my scythes, assuming my weary age !

And if I read aright, as soothsayer should,

Thy faltering steps of heavy pilgrim-

Thy paleness, deep as snow we cannot see

The roses through,—thy sighs of quick returning,

Thine eyes that seem, themselves, two souls in mourning,-

Thou lovest, girl, too well, and bitterly!

But hear me : rush no more to a headlong fall:

Seek no more deaths! leave wail, lav sorrow down,

And pray the sovran god; and use withal

Such prayer as best may suit a tender youth,

Well-pleased to bend to flatteries from thy mouth

And feel them stir the myrtle of his crown."

-So spake the shepherd-god; and answer none

Gave Psyche in return: but silently She did him homage with a bended knee,

And took the onward path.—

PSYCHE PROPITIATING CERES

(METAMORPH., LIB. VI.)

THEN mother Ceres from afar beheld

While Psyche touched, with reverent fingers meek,

The temple's scythes; and with a cry compelled her :-

"O wretched Psyche, Venus roams to seek

Thy wandering footsteps round the weary earth,

Anxious and maddened, and adjures thee forth

To accept the imputed pang, and let her wreak

Full vengeance with full force of deity!

Yet thou, for sooth, art in my temple

degree.

And daring to have thoughts that are not fear!"

But Psyche clung to her feet, and as they moved

Rained tears along their track, tear dropped on tear,

And drew the dust on in her trailing locks

And still, with passionate prayer, the charge disproved :-

" Now, by thy right hand's gathering from the shocks

Of golden corn,—and by thy gladsome rites

Of harvest,—and thy consecrated sights

by the course

Of thy slave-dragons,—and the driv- A cup-boy for his master,—he ining force

Of ploughs along Sicilian glebes profound.-

By thy swift chariot,—by thy steadfast ground,-

By all those nuptial torches that departed

With thy lost daughter,—and by those that shone

Back with her, when she came again glad-hearted.—

And by all other mysteries which are done

In silence at Eleusis,—I beseech thee, O Ceres, take some pity, and abstain From giving to my soul extremer

Who am the wretched Psyche! Let me teach thee

A little mercy, and have thy leave to spend

A few days only in thy garnered corn, Until that wrathful goddess, at the

Shall feel her hate grow mild, the longer borne,-

Or till, alas!—this faintness at my breast

Pass from me, and my spirit apprehend From life-long woe a breath-time

hour of rest!" -But Ceres answered, "I am moved

By prayers so moist with tears,

and would defend The poor beseecher from more utter need:

But where old oaths, anterior ties, commend,

I cannot fail to a sister, lie to a friend.

As Venus is to me. Depart with speed!"

PSYCHE AND THE EAGLE (METAMORPH., LIB. VI.)

But sovran Jove's rapacious Bird, the regal

great eagle,

Drove down with rushing wings; and,—thinking how.

Shut safe and mute in chests,—and By Cupid's help, he bore from Ida's brow

clined

To yield, in just return, an influence kind:

The god being honoured in his lady's woe.

And thus the Bird wheeled downward from the track.

Gods follow gods in, to the level low Of that poor face of Psyche left in wrack.

" Now fie, thou simple girl!" the Bird began;

" For if thou think to steal and carry back

A drop of holiest stream that ever

No simpler thought, methinks, were found in man.

What! know'st thou not these Stygian waters be

Most holy, even to Jove? that as, on earth.

Men swear by gods, and by the thunder's worth.

Even so the heavenly gods do utter forth

Their oaths by Styx's flowing majesty? And yet, one little urnful, I agree

To grant thy need!" Whereat, all hastily,

He takes it, fills it from the willing wave, And bears it in his beak, incarnadined

By the last Titan-prey he screamed to have:

And, striking calmly out, against the wind,

Vast wings on each side,—there. where Psyche stands,

He drops the urn down in her lifted hands.

PSYCHE AND CERBERUS (METAMORPH., LIB. VI.)

A MIGHTY dog with three colossal necks.

And heads in grand proportion; vast as fear,

High percher on the lightning, the With jaws that bark the thunder out that breaks

In most innocuous dread for ghosts anear,

Who are safe in death from sorrow: he reclines Across the threshold of queen Proser-

pine's

Pluto's spouse,

empty house. When Psyche threw the cake to him,

once amain

He howled up wildly from his hungerpain,

And was still, after.—

PSYCHE AND PROSERPINE (METAMORPH., LIB. VI.)

Then Psyche entered in to Proserpine In the dark house, and straightway did decline

With meek denial the luxurious seat, The liberal board for welcome "Drink, O my daughter, and acstrangers spread,

But sat down lowly at the dark queen's feet.

And told her tale, and brake her oaten bread.

And when she had given the pyx in humble duty,

And told how Venus did entreat

the queen To fill it up with only one day's beauty She used in Hades, star-bright and

screne, To beautify the Cyprian, who had been

All spoilt with grief in nursing her sick boy .-

Then Proserpine, in malice and in joy, Smiled in the shade, and took the pyx, and put

A secret in it; and so, filled and shut,

Gave it again to Psyche. Could she tell

It held no beauty, but a dream of hell?

PSYCHE AND VENUS

(METAMORPH., LIB. VI.)

AND Psyche brought to Venus what was sent

By Pluto's spouse; the paler, that she went

So low to seek it, down the dark descent.

MERCURY CARRIES PSYCHE TO OLYMPUS

(METAMORPH., LIB. VI.)

Dark-sweeping halls, and, there, for THEN Jove commanded the god Mercury

Doth guard the entrance of the To float up Psyche from the earth. And she

> Sprang at the first word, as the fountain springs,

> And shot up bright and rustling through his wings.

MARRIAGE OF PSYCHE AND CUPID

(METAMORPH., LIB. VI.)

AND Jove's right hand approached the ambrosial bowl

To Psyche's lips, that scarce dared yet to smile,—

quaint thy soul

With deathless uses, and be glad the while!

No more shall Cupid leave thy lovely side:

Thy marriage-joy begins for neverending."

While yet he spake,—the nuptial feast supplied,— The bridegroom on the festive

couch was bending O'er Psyche in his bosom—Jove, the

same, On Juno, and the other deities, Alike ranged round. The rural cup-

boy came And poured Jove's nectar out with

shining eyes, While Bacchus, for the others, did as much,

And Vulcan spread the meal; and all the Hours

Made all things purple with a sprinkle of flowers,

Or roses chiefly, not to say the touch Of their sweet fingers; and the Graces glided

Their balm around, and the Muses. through the air,

Struck out clear voices, which were still divided

By that divinest song Apollo there Intoned to his lute; while Aphroditè fair

Did float her beauty along the tune, and play

The notes right with her feet. And Repose so from her hunting-toil thus, the day

Through every perfect mood of joy was carried.

Muses sang their chorus; Satyrus

Did blow his pipes; Pan touched his reed ;-and thus

At last were Cupid and his Psyche married.

PARAPHRASES ON NONNUS

HOW BACCHUS FINDS ARIADNE SLEEPING

(DIONYSIACA, LIB. XLVII.)

WHEN Bacchus first beheld the deso-

And sleeping Ariadne, wonder straight Was mixed with love in his great golden eyes ;

He turned to his Bacchantes in surprise,

said with guarded voice,-And " Hush! strike no more

Your brazen cymbals; keep those voices still

Of voice and pipe; and since ye stand before

Queen Cypris, let her slumber as she will!

And yet the cestus is not here in proof. A Grace, perhaps, whom sleep has stolen aloof:

In which case, as the morning shines in view,

Wake this Aglaia !- yet in Naxos, who

Would yeil a Grace so? Hush! And if that she

Were Hebe, which of all the gods can

The pourer-out of wine? or if we think She's like the shining moon by ocean's brink,

The guide of herds,-why, could she sleep without

Endymion's breath on her cheek? or if I doubt

Of silver-footed Thetis, used to tread These shores,—even she (in reverence be it said)

Has no such rosy beauty to dress deep

With the blue waves. The Loxian goddess might

aright

Beside the sea, since toil gives birth to sleep.

But who would find her with her tunic loose.

Thus? Stand off, Thracian! stand off! Do not leap,

Not this way! Leave that piping, since I choose.

O dearest Pan, and let Athenè rest! And yet if she be Pallas . . . truly guessed . . .

Her lance is—where? her helm and ægis-where?"

-As Bacchus closed, the miserable Fair

Awoke at last, sprang upward from the sands,

And gazing wild on that wild throng that stands

Around, around her, and no Theseus there !-

Her voice went moaning over shore and sea,

Beside the halcyon's cry; she called her love:

She named her hero, and raged maddeningly Against the brine of waters; and,

above. Sought the ship's track, and cursed

the hours she slept;

And still the chiefest execration swept Against queen Paphia, mother of the ocean;

And cursed and prayed by times in her emotion The winds all round.

Her grief did make her glorious; her despair

Adorned her with its weight. Poor wailing child!

She looked like Venus when the goddess smiled

At liberty of godship, debonair; Poor Ariadne! and her eyelids fair Hid looks beneath them lent her by

Persuasion And every Grace, with tears of Love's

own passion.

She wept long; then she spake:-"Sweet sleep did come

glad and dumb,

sleep

I saw his Athens, and did gladly keep My new bride-state within my Theseus' hall:

And heard the pomp of Hymen, and the call

Of 'Ariadne, Ariadne,' sung

In choral joy; and there, with joy I

Spring-blossoms round love's altar! -ay, and wore

A wreath myself; and felt him evermore,

Oh, evermore beside me, with his mighty

Grave head bowed down in prayer to Aphroditè!

Why, what a sweet, sweet dream! He went with it.

And left me here unwedded where I sit!

Persuasion help me! The dark night did make me

A brideship, the fair morning takes away;

My Love had left me when the Hour did wake me; And while I dreamed of marriage.

as I say,

And blest it well, my blessed Theseus left me:

And thus the sleep, I loved so, has To change thy bridegroom! Happy bereft me.

Speak to me, rocks, and tell my grief to-day, Who stole my love of Athens?"...

HOW BACCHUS COMFORTS ARIADNE (DIONYSIACA, LIB. XLVII.)

THEN Bacchus' subtle speech her sorrow crossed :-"O maiden, dost thou mourn for

having lost

The false Athenian heart? and dost thou still

Take thought of Theseus, when thou mayst at will

chus bright!

though

While sweetest Theseus went. Oh, The mortal youth be charming in thy sight,

I wish he had left me still! for in my That man of Athens cannot strive below.

In beauty and valour, with my deity! Thou'lt tell me of the labyrinthine dweller.

The fierce man-bull he slew: I pray thee, be,

Fair Ariadne, the true deed's true teller.

And mention thy clue's help! because, forsooth,

Thine armed Athenian hero had not found

A power to fight on that prodigious ground, Unless a lady in her rosy youth

Had lingered near him: not to speak the truth

Too definitely out till names be known-

Like Paphia's--Love's--and Ariadne's own.

Thou wilt not say that Athens can compare

With Æther, nor that Minos rules like Zeus,

Nor yet that Gnossus has such golden air As high Olympus. Ha! for noble

use We came to Naxos! Love has well

intended

thou, defended From entering in thy Theseus' earthly

hall. That thou mayst hear the laughters

rise and fall Instead, where Bacchus rules! Or

wilt thou choose A still-surpassing glory?—take it all,—

A heavenly house, Kronion's self for kin.-

A place where Cassiopea sits within Inferior light, for all her daughter's sake.

Since Perseus, even amid the stars, must take

Andromeda in chains ethereal!

Have Bacchus for a husband? Bac- But I will wreathe thee, sweet, an astral crown.

A god in place of mortal! Yes, and And as my queen and spouse thou shalt be knownMine, the crown-lover's!" Thus, PARAPHRASE ON EURIPIDES at length, he proved

His comfort on her; and the maid was moved;

And casting Theseus' memory down the brine,

She straight received the troth of her divine

Fair Bacchus; Love stood by to close the rite:

The marriage-chorus struck up clear and light,

Flowers sprouted fast about the chamber green,

And with spring-garlands on their heads. I ween.

The Orchomenian dancers came along And danced their rounds in Naxos to the song.

A Hamadryad sang a nuptial dit Right shrilly: and a Naiad sat be-

A fountain, with her bare foot shelving it,

And hymned of Ariadne, beauteous bride.

Whom thus the god of grapes had deified.

Ortygia sang out, louder than her

An ode which Phœbus gave her to be tried.

And leapt in chorus, with her steadfast front.

While prophet Love, the stars have called a brother.

Burnt in his crown, and twined in one another.

His love-flower with the purple roses,

In type of that new crown assigned in heaven.

PARAPHRASE ON HESIOD BACCHUS AND ARIADNE

(THEOG. 947.) THE golden-hairèd Bacchus did

espouse That fairest Ariadne, Minos' daugh-

And made her wifehood blossom in the house:

Where such protective gifts Kronion brought her,

Nor Death nor Age could find her when they sought her.

ANTISTROPHE

(TROADES, 853.*)

LCVE, Love, who once didst pass the Dardan portals,

Because of heavenly passion! Who once didst lift up Troy in exultation,

To mingle in thy bond the high Immortals !-

Love, turned from his own name

To Zeus's shame.

Can help no more at all. And Eos' self, the fair, white-steeded Morning —

Her light which blesses other lands, returning,

Has changed to a gloomy pall! She looked across the land with eves of amber,-

She saw the city's fall,— She who, in pure embraces,

Had held there, in the hymeneal chamber.

Her children's father, bright Tithonus

Whom the four steeds with starry brows and paces

Bore on, snatched upward, on the car of gold, And with him, all the land's full hope

of joy!

The love-charms of the gods are vain for Troy.

PARAPHRASES ON HOMER

HECTOR AND ANDROMACHE

(ILIAD, LIB. VI.)

SHE rushed to meet him: the nurse following

Bore on her bosom the unsaddened child.

A simple babe, prince Hector's wellloved son,

Like a star shining when the world is dark.

Scamandrius, Hector called him; but the rest

Named him Astyanax, the city's prince,

* Rendered after Mr. Burges' reading, in some respects—not quite all.

Because that Hector only had saved Of Hippoplacia, he, with other spoil. Troy.

He, when he saw his son, smiled silently;

While, dropping tears, Andromache pressed on,

And clung to his hand, and spake,

and named his name.

"Hector, my best one,—thine own Father and mother !—yes, nobleness

thou none

For this young child, and this most Come now, and take me into pity! sad myself,

that soon

The Greeks will slay thee in the An orphan, nor a widow thy poor general rush-

And then, for me, what refuge, 'reft of thee.

But to go graveward? Then, no comfort more

Shall touch me, as in the old sad times thou know'st-

Grief only—grief! I have no father

mother mild! Achilles the divine.

He slew my father, sacked his lofty Thebes.

Cilicia's populous city, and slew its king,

Eëtion—father!—did not spoil the

Because the Greek revered him in his soul.

But burnt the body with its dædal

And poured the dust out gently. Round that tomb

The Oreads, daughters of the goat- If, coward-like, I shunned the open nursed Zeus,

Tripped in a ring, and planted their Nor doth my own soul prompt me to green elms.

There were seven brothers with me in the house,

Who all went down to Hades in one day.-

For he slew all, Achilles the divine. Famed for his swift feet,—slain among their herds

Of cloven-footed bulls and flocking sheep!

My mother too, who queened it o'er And Priam and his people. Knowing the woods

Seized,—and, for golden ransom, freed too late,—

Since, as she went home, arrowy Artemis Met her and slew her at my father's

But—O my Hector,—thou art still to

me

brother dear. Must needs undo thee. Pity hast O thou, who art my sweetest spouse

beside!

Stay Who soon shall be thy widow-since I' the town here with us! Do not

make thy child

wife! Call up the people to the fig-tree,

where The city is most accessible, the wall

Most easy of assault!—for thrice thereby

The boldest Greeks have mounted to the breach.—

Both Ajaxes, the famed Idomeneus, Two sons of Atreus, and the noble one Of Tydeus,—whether taught by some wise seer,

Or by their own souls prompted and inspired."

Great Hector answered: -- "Lady, for these things

It is my part to care. And I fear most

My Trojans, and their daughters, and their wives,

Who through their long veils would glance scorn at me

that end!

I learnt to be a brave man constantly, And to fight foremost where my Trojans fight,

And vindicate my father's glory and mine-

Because I know, by instinct and my

The day comes that our sacred Troy must fall,

which.

I have no such grief for all my Tro- And thus invoked Zeus and the jans' sake,

For Hecuba's, for Priam's, our old king, Not for my brothers', who so many and brave

Shall bite the dust before our enemies.-

As, sweet, for thee !- to think some mailèd Greek

Shall lead thee weeping and deprive thy life

Of the free sun-sight—that, when gone away

To Argos, thou shalt throw the distaff there.

Not for thy uses-or shalt carry instead

Upon thy loathing brow, as heavy as doom.

The water of Greek wells-Messeis'

Or Hyperea's !--that some standerby,

Marking my tears fall, shall say, 'This is she,

The wife of that same Hector who fought best

Of all the Trojans, when all fought for Troy-

Ay !-- and, so speaking, shall renew thy pang

That, reft of him so named, thou shouldst survive

To a slave's life! But earth shall hide my corse

Ere that shriek sound, wherewith thou art dragged from Troy.'

Thus Hector spake, and stretched his arms to his child.

Against the nurse's breast, with •childly cry, The boy clung back, and shunned

his father's face, And feared the glittering brass and

waving hair Of the high helmet, nodding horror

The father smiled, the mother could not choose

But smile too. Then he lifted from his brow

The helm, and set it on the ground to shine:

Then, kissed his dear child-raised AND so these daughters fair of Panhim with both arms,

general gods :-

" Zeus, and all godships! grant this boy of mine

To be the Trojans' help, as I myself,— To live a brave life and rule well in Troy!

Till men shall say, 'The son exceeds the sire

By a far glory.' Let him bring home spoil

Heroic, and make glad his mother's heart."

With which prayer, to his wife's extended arms

He gave the child; and she received him straight

To her bosom's fragrance—smiling up her tears.

Hector gazed on her till his soul was moved;

Then softly touched her with his hand and spake. "My best one—'ware of passion and

excess In any fear. There's no man in the

world Can send me to the grave apart from fate.-

And no man . . . sweet, I tell thee . . . can fly fate-

No good nor bad man. Doom is selffulfilled.

But now, go home, and ply thy woman's task

Of wheel and distaff! bid thy maidens · haste

Their occupation. War's a care for men-

For all men born in Troy, and chief for me."

Thus spake the noble Hector, and resumed

His crested helmet, while his spouse went home;

But as she went, still looked back lovingly,

Dropping the tears from her reverted face.

THE DAUGHTERS OF PANDARUS (ODYSS., LIB. XX.)

darus

The whirlwinds took. The gods had | Whether mortals have good chance slain their kin:

father's house.

them

Wth incense, luscious honey, and fragrant wine;

And Herè gave them beauty of face and soul

Beyond all women; purest Artemis Endowed them with her stature and white grace;

And Pallas taught their hands to flash along

Her famous looms. Then, bright with deity,

Toward far Olympus, Aphroditè went To ask of Zeus (who has his thunderiovs

And his full knowledge of man's mingled fate)

How best to crown those other gifts with love

And worthy marriage: but, what time she went,

The ravishing Harpies snatched the maids away.

And gave them up, for all their loving

To serve the Furies who hate constantly.

ANOTHER VERSION

So the storms bore the daughters of Pandarus out into thrall—

The gods slew their parents; the orphans were left in the hall.

And there, came, to feed their young lives, Aphroditè divine,

With the incense, the sweet-tasting honey, the sweet-smelling wine :

Herè brought them her wit above woman's, and beauty of face:

And pure Artemis gave them her stature, that form might have grace:

And Athenè instructed their hands in her works of renown;

afar to Olympus, divine Aphroditè moved on:

To complete other gifts, by uniting ART thou indeed so adverse? each girl to a mate,

She sought Zeus, who has joy in the Against the woman who wrongs me

or ill! But the Harpies a-late They were left orphans in their In the storm came, and swept off the maidens, and gave them to wait, And Aphroditè came to comfort With that love in their eyes, on the Furies who constantly hate.

PARAPHRASE ON ANACREON

ODE TO THE SWALLOW Thou indeed, little Swallow, A sweet yearly comer, Art building a hollow New nest every summer, And straight dost depart Where no gazing can follow, Past Memphis, down Nile! Ah! but Love all the while Builds his nest in my heart, Through the cold winter-weeks: And as one Love takes flight, Comes another, O Swallow, In an egg warm and white, And another is callow. And the large gaping beaks Chirp all day and all night: And the Loves who are older Help the young and the poor Loves, And the young Loves grown bolder Increase by the score Loves— Why, what can be done? If a noise comes from one, Can I bear all this rout of a hundred and more Loves?

PARAPHRASES ON HEINE

[THE LAST TRANSLATION] ROME, 1860

Our of my own great woe I make my little songs, Which rustle their feathers in throngs And beat on her heart even so.

They found the way, for their part, Yet come again, and complain, Complain, and are not fain To say what they saw in her heart.

TT

Art thou so changed indeed? thunder and knowledge of fate, I cry to the world in my need. TT

O recreant lips unthankful, How could ye speak evil, say, Of the man who so well has kissed you

On many a fortunate day?

III

Ι

My child, we were two children, Small, merry by childhood's law; We used to crawl to the hen-house And hide ourselves in the straw.

TT

We crowed like cocks, and whenever The passers near us drew— Cock-a-doodle! they thought 'Twas a real cock that crew.

II

The boxes about our courtyard We carpeted to our mind, And lived there both together—Kept house in a noble kind.

IV

The neighbour's old cat often Came to pay us a visit; We made her a bow and curtsey, Each with a compliment in it.

v

After her health we asked,
Our care and regard to evince—
(We have made the very same speeches
To many an old cat since).

VI

We also sat and wisely Discoursed, as old folk do, Complaining how all went better In those good times we knew,—

VII

How love and truth and believing Had left the world to itself, And how so dear was the coffee, And how so rare was the pelf.

37777

The children's games are over,
The rest is over with youth—
The world, the good games, the good times.

The belief, and the love, and the truth.

ΙV

Thou lovest me not, thou lovest me not!

'Tis scarcely worth a sigh:

Let me look in thy face, and no king in his place

Is a gladder man than I.

II

Thou hatest me well, thou hatest me well—

Thy little red mouth has told: Let it reach me a kiss, and, however it is,

My child, I am well consoled.

V

My own sweet Love, if thou in the grave.

The darksome grave, wilt be, Then will I go down by the side, and crave

Love-room for thee and me.

11

I kiss and caress and press thee wild, Thou still, thou cold, thou white! I wail, I tremble, and weeping mild, Turn to a corpse at the right.

III

The Dead stand up, the midnight calls,

They dance in airy swarms—
We two keep still where the graveshade falls,

And I lie on in thine arms.

IV

The Dead stand up, the Judgmentday

Bids such to weal or woe— But nought shall trouble us where we

Embraced and embracing below.

VI

THE years they come and go,
The races drop in the grave,
Yet never the love doth so,
Which here in my heart I have.

Could I see thee but once, one day, And sink down so on my knee, And die in thy sight while I say, "Lady, I love but thee!"

THE GREEK CHRISTIAN POETS

AND THE ENGLISH POETS

1863

ADVERTISEMENT

THE following pieces, first printed in 1842 by the "Athenæum," are now reprinted with the liberal permission

of that Journal.

It was intended by its Writer, that the account of the Greek Christian Poets should receive corrections. or certainly additions: a project which new objects of interest came to delay. The glancing series of notes upon the English Poets seems suggested by, as well as consequent upon, 'the account; unless it arose from the publication of Wordsworth's " Poems of Early and Late Years, including The Borderers,"—in the form of a review of which the latter part of the paper originally appeared: the former was occasioned by "The Book of the Poets," a compilation of the day.

Both performances, laid away long ago, and only lately unfolded for the first time, were perhaps almost forgotten by their Author; but on the whole, in all likelihood, some way or other reproduction was desired: and this is effected accordingly.

A name, which occurs unworthily enough toward the close, should be withdrawn were it found possible: its presence may be pardoned, as serving at least to mark more dates than one.

LONDON, February, 1863.

SOME ACCOUNT OF THE GREEK CHRISTIAN POETS

THE Greek language was a strong intellectual life, stronger than any similar one which has lived in the breath of "articulately speaking men," and survived it. No other language has lived so long and died so hard,—pang by pang, each with a dolphin colour yielding reluctantly to that doom of death and silence which must come at last to the speaker and the speech.

years away—where whole generations lie unmade to dust-where the sounding of their trumpets, and the rushing of their scythed chariots, and that great shout which brought down the birds stone dead from beside the sun are more silent than the dog breathing at our feet, or the fly's paces on our window-pane; and yet, from the heart of which silence, to feel words rise up like a smoke—words of men. even words of women, uttered at first. perhaps, in "excellent low voices," but audible and distinct to our times. through "the dreadful pother" of life and death, the hissing of the steam-engine and the cracking of the cerement! It is wonderful to look back and listen. Blind Homer spoke this Greek after blind Demodocus, with a quenchless light about his brows, which he felt through his blindness. Pindar rolled his chariots in it, prolonging the clamour of the games. Sappho's heart beat through it, and heaved up the world's. Æschylus strained it to the stature of his high thoughts. Plato crowned it with his divine peradventures. Aristophanes made it drunk with the wine of his fantastic merriment. The latter Platonists wove their souls away in it, out of sight of other souls. The first Christians heard in it God's new revelation, and confessed their Christ in it from the suppliant's knee, and presently from the bishop's throne. To all times, and their transitions, the language lent itself. Through the long summer of above two thousand years, from the grasshopper Homer sang of, to that grasshopper of Manuel Phile, which might indeed have been a burden," we can in nowise mistake the chirping of the bloodless, deathless, wondrous creature. It chirps on in Greek still. At the close of that long summer, though Greece lay withered to her root, her acade-Wonderful it is to look back fathoms mic groves and philosophic gardens down the great Past, thousands of all leafless and bare, still from the

depth of the desolation rose up the

O cuckoo, shall I call thee bird, Or but a wandering voice?

which did not grow hoarse, like other cuckoos, but sang not unsweetly, if more faintly than before. Strangely vital was this Greek language-

Some straggling spirits were behind, to be Laid out with most thrift on its memory.

It seemed as if nature could not part with so lovely a tune, as if she felt it ringing on still in her head—or as if she hummed it to herself, as the watchman used to do, with " night wandering round" him, when he watched wearily on the palace roof of the

doomed house of Atreus.

But, although it is impossible to touch with a thought the last estate of Greek poetical literature without the wonder occurring of its being still Greek, still poetry,—though we are startled by the phenomenon of lifelike sounds coming up from the ashes of a mighty people—at the aspect of an Alcestis returned from the dead. veiled but identical,—we are forced to admit, after the first pause of admiration, that a change has passed upon the great thing we recognise, a change proportionate to the greatness, and involving a caducity. Therefore, in adventuring some imperfect account of the Greek ecclesiastical poets, it is right to premise it with the full and frank admission, that they are not accomplished poets,—that they do not, in fact, reach with their those whom the world has honoured as Greek poets, but who have honoured the world more by their poetry. The instrument of the Greek tongue was, at the Christian era, an antique instrument, somewhat worn, somewhat stiff in the playing, somewhat deficient in notes which it had once, somewhatfeeble and uncertain in such as it retained. The subtlety of the ancient music, the variety of its cadences, the intersections of sweetness in the rise and fall of melodies. rounded and contained in the unity

of its harmony, are as utterly lost to this later period as the digamma was to an earlier one. We must not seek for them; we shall not find them; their place knows them no more. Not only was there a lack in the instrument,—there was also a deficiency in the players. Thrown aside, after the old flute-story, by a goddess, it was taken up by a mortal hand—by the hand of men gifted and noble in their generation, but belonging to it intellectually, even by their gifts and their nobleness. Another immortal, a true genius, might, nay, would, have asserted himself, and wrung a poem of almost the ancient force from the infirm instrument. It is easy to fancy, and to wish that it had been so—that some martyr or bishop, when bishops were martyrs, and the earth was still warm with the Sacrificial blood, had been called to the utterance of his soul's devotion, with the emphasis of a great poet's power. No one, however, was so called. Of all the names which shall presently be reckoned, and of which it is the object of this sketch to give some account, beseeching its readers to hold several in honourable remembrance, not one can be crowned with a steady hand as a true complete poet's name. Such a crown is a sacred dignity, and, as it should not be touched idly, it must not be used here. A born Warwick could find, here, no head for a crown.

Yet we shall reckon names "for remembrance," and speak of things not ignoble-of meek heroic Chrishighest lifted hand, the lowest foot of tians, and heavenward faces washed serene by tears-strong knees bending humbly for the very strength's sake-bright intellects burning often to the winds in fantastic shapes, but oftener still with an honest inward heat, vehement on heart and brain—most eloquent fallible lips that convince us less than they persuade—a divine loquacity of human falsities-poetical souls, that are not souls of poets! Surely not ignoble things! And the reader will perceive at once that the writer's heart is not laid beneath the wheels of a cumbrous ecclesiastical antiquity—that its intent is to love what is lovable, to honour what is honourable, and to kiss both through the dust of centuries, but by no means to recognise a hierarchy, whether in the

church or in literature.

If, indeed, an opinion on the former relation might be regarded here, it would be well to suggest, that to these "Fathers," as we call them filially, with heads turned away, we owe more reverence for the greyness of their beards than theologic gratitude for the outstretching of their hands. Devoted and disinterested as many among them were, they, themselves, were at most times evidently and consciously surer of their love, in a theologic sense, than of their knowledge in any. It is no place for a reference to religious controversy; and if it were, we are about to consider them simply as poets. without trenching on the very wide ground of their prose works and ecclesiastical opinions. Still one passing remark may be admissible, since the fact is so remarkable—how any body of Christian men can profess to derive their opinions from "the opinions of the Fathers," when all bodies might do so equally. These fatherly opinions are, in truth, multiform, and multitudinous as the fatherly "sublime grey hairs." There is not only a father apiece for every child, but, not to speak it unfilially, a piece of every father for every child. Justin Martyr would, of himself, set up a wilderness of sects, besides "something over" for the future ramifications of each several one. What then should be done with our " Fathers "? Leave them to perish by the time-Ganges, as old men innocent and decrepit, and worthy of no use or honour? Surely not. We may learn of them, if God will let us, love, and love is much—we may learn devotedness of them and warm our hearts by theirs; and this, although we rather distrust them as commentators, and utterly refuse them the reverence of our souls, in the capacity of theological oracles.

Their place in literature, which we have to do with to-day, may be found, perhaps, by a like moderation. That place is not, it has been admitted, of the highest; and that it is not of the lowest the proof will presently be attempted. There is a mid-air kingdom of the birds called Nephelococcygia, of which Aristophanes tells us something; and we might stand there a moment so as to measure the local adaptitude, putting up the Promethean umbrella to hide us from the "Gods," if it were not for the "men and columns" lower down. But as it is, the very suggestion, if persisted in, would sink all the ecclesiastical antiquity it is desirable to find favour for, to all eternity, in the estimation of the kindest reader. No! the midair kingdom of the birds will not serve the wished-for purpose even illustratively, and by grace of the nightingale. "May the sweet saints pardon us" for wronging them by an approach to such a sense, which, if attained and determined, would have consigned them so certainly to what St. Augustine called—when he was moderate too-"mitissima damnatio," a very mild species of damnation.

It would be, in fact, a rank injustice to the beauty we are here to recognise, to place these writers in the rank of mediocrities, supposing the harsh sense. They may be called mediocrities as poets among poets, but not so as no poets at all. Some of them may sing before gods and men, and in front of any column, from Trajan's to that projected one in Trafalgar Square, to which is promised the miraculous distinction of making the National Gallery sink lower than we see it now. They may, as a body, sing exultingly, holding the relation of column to gallery, in front of the whole "corpus" of Latin ecclesiastical poetry, and claim the world's ear and the poet's palm. That the modern Latin poets have been more read by scholars, and are better known by reputation to the general reader, is unhappily true: but the truth involves no good reason why it should be so, nor much marvel that it is so. Besides the greater accessibility of Latin literature, the vicissitude of life is extended to posthumous fame, and Time, who is Justice to the poet, is sometimes too busy in pulverising bones to give the due weight to memories. The modern Latin poets, "elegant,"—which is the critic's word to spend upon them,-elegant as they are occasionally, polished and accurate as they are comparatively, stand cold and lifeless, with statue-eyes, near these good, fervid, faulty Greeks of oursand we do not care to look again. Our Greeks do, in their degree, claim their ancestral advantage, not the mere advantage of language,—nay, least the advantage of language—a comparative elegance and accuracy of expression being ceded to the Latins —but that higher distinction inherent in brain and breast, of vivid thought and quick sensibility. What if we swamp for a moment the Tertullians and Prudentiuses, and touch, by a permitted anachronism, with one hand, VIDA, with the other, GREGORY then? What NAZIANZEN, what though the Italian poet be smooth as the Italian Canova-working like him out of stone-smooth and cold. disdaining to ruffle his dactyls with the beating of his pulses—what then? Would we change for him our sensitive Gregory, with all his defects in the glorious "scientia metrica"? We would not—perhaps we should not, even if those defects were not attributable, as Mr. Boyd, in the preface to his work on the Fathers, most justly intimates, to the changes incident to a declining language.

It is, too, as religious poets, that we are called upon to estimate these neglected Greeks—as religious poets, of whom the universal church and the world's literature would gladly embrace more names than can be counted to either. For it is strange that, although Wilhelm Meister's uplooking and downlooking aspects, things below, the religious all-clasp- worse than growl in their sleeves,

ing spirit, be, and must be, in degree and measure, the grand necessity of every true poet's soul,-of religious poets, strictly so called, the earth is very bare. Religious "parcel-poets" we have, indeed, more than enough: writers of hymns, translators of scripture into prose, or of prose generally into rhymes, of whose heart-devotion a higher faculty were worthy. Also there have been poets, not a few, singing as if earth were still Eden; and poets, many, singing as if in the first hour of exile, when the echo of the Curse was louder than the whisper of the Promise. But the right "genius of Christianism" has done little up to this moment. even for Chateaubriand. We want the touch of Christ's hand upon our literature, as it touched other dead things-we want the sense of the saturation of Christ's blood upon the souls of our poets, that it may cry through them in answer to the ceaseless wail of the Sphinx of our humanity, expounding agony into renovation. Something of this has been perceived in art when its glory was at the fullest. Something of a yearning after this may be seen among the Greek Christian poets, something which would have been much with a stronger faculty. It will not harm us in any case, as lovers of literature and honest judges, if we breathe away, or peradventure besom away, the thick dust which lies upon their heavy folios, and besom away, or peradventure breathe away, the inward intellectual dust, which must be confessed to lie thickly, too, upon the heavy poems, and make our way softly and meekly into the heart of such hidden beauties (hidden and scattered) as our good luck, or good patience, or, to speak more reverently, the intrinsic goodness of the Fathers of Christian Poetry, shall permit us to discover. May gentle readers favour the endeavour, with "gentle airs," if any! readers not too proud to sleep, were it only for Homer's sake; nor too passionate, the reverence to things above and at their worst displeasure, to do after the manner of "most delicate the worse), compendiously relating monsters." It is not intended to crush this forbearing class with folios, nor even with a folio; only to set down briefly in their sight what shall appear to the writer the characteristics of each poet, and to illustrate the opinion by the translation of a few detached passages, or, in certain possible cases, of short entire poems. And so much has been preexpected.

It has the look of an incongruity. to begin an account of the Greek EZEKIEL is a Tew in his very name. and a "poet of the Jews" by profession. Moreover he is wrapt in such a mystery of chronology, that nobody can be quite sure of his not having lived before the Christian era—and one whole whisper establishes him as a unit of the famous seventy or seventy-two, under Ptolemy Philadelphus. Let us waive the chronology in favour of the mystery. He is brought out into light by Clemens Alexandrinus; and being associated with Greek poets, and a writer himself of Greek verses, we may receive him in virtue of the τοτοτοτοτοτοτοτοτιγξ, with little fear, in his case, of implying an injustice in that middle bird-locality of Nephelococcygia. The reader must beware of confounding him with the prophet; and the circumstance of the latter's inspiraation is sufficiently distinguishing. Our Greek Ezekiel is, indeed, whatever his chronology may be, no vates in the ancient sense. A Greek tragedy (and some fragments of a tragedy are all that we hold of him), by a Jew, and on a Jewish subject, "The Exodus from Egypt," may startle the most serene of us into curiosity-with which curiosity begins and ends the only strong feeling we can bring to bear upon the work; since, if the execution of it is somewhat curious too, there is a gentle collateral dulness which effectually secures us from feverish excitement. manner of Euripides (worse than nobody is looking.'

his adventures among the bulrushes and in Pharaoh's household, concluded by his slaying an Egyptian, because nobody was looking. So saith the poet. Then follows an interview between the Israelite and Zipporah, and her companions, wherein he puts to her certain geographical questions, and she (as far as we can make out through fragmentary mised, simply that too much be not cracks) rather brusquely proposes their mutual marriage: on which subject he does not venture an opinion; but we find him next confiding Christian poets with a Jew; and his dreams in a family fashion to her father, who considers them satisfactory. Here occurs a broad crack down the tragedy-and we are suddenly called to the revelation from the bush by an extraordinarily ordinary dialogue, between Deity and Moses. It is a surprising specimen of the kind of composition adverted to some lines ago, as the translation of Scripture into prose; and the sublime simplicity of the scriptural narrative being thus done (away) into Greek for a certain time, the following reciprocation—to which our moralities can scarcely do more, or less, than furnish a parallel—prays for an English—exposure. The Divine Being is supposed to address Moses :-

> But what is this thou holdest in thine hand ?-

hang:— Let thy reply be sudden. 'Tis my rod— I chasten with it quadrupeds and men. Voice from the Bush. Cast it upon the ground-and straight recoil;

For it shall be, to move thy wonderment, A terrible serpent.

It is cast. But Thou, Moses. Be gracious to me, Lord. How terrible! How monstrous! Oh, be pitiful to me! I shudder to behold it, my limbs shake.

The reader is already consoled for the destiny which mutilated the tragedy, without requiring the last words of the analysis. Happily characteristic of the "meekest of men," is Moses's naïve admission of the uses of his rod-to beat men and Moses prologises after the worst animals withal-of course "when

CLEMENS ALEXANDRINUS, to whom we owe whatever gratitude is due for our fragmentary Ezekiel, was originally an Athenian philosopher, afterwards a converted Christian, a Presbyter of the Church at Alexandria. and preceptor of the famous Origen. Clemens flourished at the close of the second century. As a prose writer and we have no prose writings of his, except such as were produced subsequently to his conversion—he is learned and various. His "Pedagogue" is a wanderer, to universal intents and purposes; and his "Tapestry," if the "Stromata" may be called so, is embroidered in all cross-stitches of philosophy, with not much scruple as to the shading of colours. In the midst of all is something, ycleped a dithyrambic ode, addressed to the Saviour, composite of fantastic epithets in the mode of the old litanies, and almost as bald of merit as the Jew-Greek drama, though Clemens himself (worthier in worthier places) be the poet. Here is the opening, which is less fanciful than what follows it:

Curb for wild horses. Wing for bird-courses Never yet flown! Helm, safe for weak ones, Shepherd, bespeak once, The young lambs thine own. Rouse up the youth, Shepherd and feeder, So let them bless thee, Praise and confess thee,-Pure words on pure mouth,-Christ, the child-leader! O, the saints' Lord! All-dominant word! Holding, by Christdom, God's highest wisdom! Column in place When sorrows seize us-Endless in grace Unto man's race, Saving one, Jesus! Pastor and ploughman, Helm, curb, together,-Pinion that now can (Heavenly of feather) Raise and release us! Fisher who catcheth Those whom he watcheth . . .

It goes on; but we need not do so.

know that the reader has had enough

Passing rapidly into the fourth century, we would offer our earliest homage to Gregory Nazianzen,

"That name must ever be to us a friend," when the two Apolinarii cross our path and intercept the "all hail." Apolinarius the grammarian, formerly of Alexandria, held the office of presbyter in the church of Laodicæa, and his son Apolinarius, an accomplished rhetorician, that of reader, an ancient ecclesiastical office, in the same church. This younger Apolinarius was a man of indomitable energies and most practical inferences; and when the edict of Julian forbade to the Christians the study of Grecian letters, he, assisted perhaps by his father's hope and hand, stood strong in the gap, not in the attitude of supplication, not with the gesture of consolation, but in power and sufficiency to fill up the void and baffle the tyrant. Both father and son were in the work, by some testimony; the younger Apolinarius standing out. by all, as the chief worker, and only one in any extensive sense. "Does Julian deny us Homer?" said the brave man in his armed soul-"I am Homer!" and straightway he turned the whole Biblical history, down to Saul's accession, into Homeric hexameters,—dividing the work, so as to clench the identity of first and second Homers, into twentyfour books, each superscribed by a letter of the alphabet, and the whole acceptable, according to the expression of Sozomen, ἀντὶ τῆς 'Ομήρου ποιήσεως, in the place of Homer's poetry. "Does Julian deny us Euripides?" said Apolinarius again __"I am Euripides!" and up he sprang,—as good an Euripides (who can doubt it?) as he ever was a Homer, "Does Julian forbid us Menander? — Pindar? — Plato? — I am Menander!—I am Pindar!—I am Plato!" And comedies, lyrics, philosophics, flowed fast at the word; and the gospels and epistles adapted themselves naturally to the rules of " By the pricking of our thumbs," we | Socratic disputation. A brave man,

forsooth, was our Apolinarius of Laodicæa, and literally a man of men-for, observe, says Sozomen, with a venerable innocence, at which the gravest may smile gravely,—as at a doublet worn awry at the Council of Nice.—that the old authors did each man his own work, whereas this Apolinarius did every man's work in addition to his own-and so admirably—intimates the ecclesiastical critic,-that if it were not for the common prejudice in favour of antiquity, no ancient could be missed in the all-comprehensive representativeness of the Laodicæan writer. So excellent was his ability, to " outbrave the stars in several kinds of light," besides the Cæsar! Whether Julian, naturally mortified to witness this germination of illustrious heads under the very iron of his searing, vowed vengeance against the Hydraspirit, by the sacred memory of the animation of his own beard, we do not exactly know. To embitter the wrong, Apolinarius sent him a treatise upon truth—a confutation of the pagan doctrine, apart from the scriptural argument,—the Emperor's notice of which is both worthy of his Cæsarship, and a good modelnotice for all sorts of critical dignities. 'Ανέγνων έγνων κατέγνων, is the Greek of it; so that, turning from the letter to catch something of the point, we may write it down-" I have perused, I have mused, I have abused": which provoked as imperious a retort—"Thou mayest have perused, but thou hast not mused; for hadst thou mused, thou wouldst not have abused." Brave Laodicæan!

Apolinarius's laudable double of Greek literature has perished, the reader will be concerned to hear, from the face of the earth, being, like other lusus, or marvels, or monsters, brief of days. One only tragedy remains, with which the memory of Gregory Nazianzen has been right tragically affronted, and which Gregory,el τις αίσθησις, as he said of Con-centoism, which is the adaptation stantine,-would cast off with the of the phraseology of one work to the

arian heresy. For Apolinarius, besides being an epoist, dramatist, lyrist, philosopher, and rhetorician, was, we are sorry to add, in the eternal bustle of his soul, a heretic, possibly for the advantage of something additional to do. He not only intruded into the churches hymns which were not authorised, being his own composition—so that reverend brows grew dark to hear women with musical voices sing them softly to the turning of their distaff,-but he fell into the heresy of denying a human soul to the perfect MAN, and of leaving the Divinity in bare combination with the Adamic dust. wonder that a head so beset with many thoughts and individualities should at last turn round !- that eves rolling in fifty fine frenzies of twentyfive fine poets should at last turn blind!—that a determination to rival all geniuses should be followed by a disposition more baleful in its exercise, to understand "all mysteries"! Nothing can be plainer than the step after step, whereby, through excess of vain-glory and morbid mental activity, Apolinarius. the vice-poet of Greece, subsided into Apolinarius the chief heretic of Christendom.

To go back sighingly to the tragedy. where we shall have to sigh againthe only tragedy left to us of all the tragic works of Apolinarius (but we do not sigh for that !)—let no voice ever more attribute it to Gregory Nazianzen. How could Mr. Alford do so, however hesitatingly, in his "Chapters," attaching to it, without the hesitation, a charge upon the writer, whether Gregory or another man, that he, whoever he was, had, of his own free will and choice, destroyed the old Greek originals out of which his tragedy was constructed, and left it a monument of their sacrifice as of the blood on his barbarian hand? The charge passes, not only before a breath, but before its own breath. The tragedy is, in fact, a specimen of scorn and anger befitting an Apolin- construction of another; and we

have only to glance at it to perceive the Medæa of Euripides dislocated into the Christus Patiens. Instead of the ancient opening-

Oh, would ship Argo had not sailed away To Colchos by the rough Symplegades! Nor ever had been felled in Pelion's grove

The pine, hewn for her side! . . .

So she, my queen, Medæa, had not touched this fatal shore, Soul-struck by love of Jason!

Apolinarius opens it thus—

Oh, would the serpent had not glode along To Eden's garden-land,—nor ever had The crafty dragon planted in that grove A slimy snare! So she, rib-born of man, The wretched misled mother of our race, Had dared not to dare on beyond worst daring,

Soul-struck by love of-apples!

"Let us alone for keeping our countenance "-and at any rate we are bound to ask gravely of Mr. Alford, by doubting the authenticity. is the Medæa destroyed?—and if not, Patiens" destroy his originals? and if not, may we not say of Mr. Alford's charge against that author, "Oh, would he had not made it!" So far from Apolinarius being guilty of destroying his originals, it was his reverence for them which struggled with the edict of the persecutor, and accomplished this dramatic adventure :—and this adventure, the only remaining specimen of his adventurousness, may help us to the secret of his wonderful fertility and omnirepresentativeness, which is probably this—that the great majority of his works, tragic, comic, lyric, and philosophic, consisted simply of centos. Yet we pray for justice to Apolinarius: we pray for honour to his motives and energies. Without pausing to inquire whether it had been better and wiser to let poetry and literature depart at once before the tyranny of the edict, than to drag them back by the hair into attitudes grotesquely ridiculousbetter and wiser for the Greek Christian schools to let them forgo altogether the poems of their Euripides, than adapt to the meek sorrows of the "half of his soul," pressed on him

the tender Virgin-mother, the bold. bad, cruel frenzy of Medæa, in such verses as these-

She howls out ancient oaths, invokes the faith

Of pledged right hands, and calls, for witness, God!

-we pray straightforwardly for justice and honour to the motives and energies of Apolinarius. "Oh, would that" many lived now as appreciative of the influences of poetry on our schools and country, as impatient of their contraction, as self-devoted in the great work of extending them! There remains of his poetical labours, besides the tragedy, a translation of David's Psalms into "heroic verse," which the writer of these remarks has not seen,-and of which those critics who desire to deal gently with Apolinarius seem to begin their indulgence

It is pleasant to turn shortly did the author of the "Christus round, and find ourselves face to face, not with the author of "Christus Patiens," but with one antagonistical both to his poetry and his heresy, GREGORY NAZIANZEN. A noble and tender man was this Gregory, and so tender, because so no ble; a man to lose no cubit of his stature for being looked at steadfastly, or struck at reproachfully. "You may cast me down," he said, "from my bishop's throne, but you cannot banish me from before God's." And bishop as he was, his saintly crown stood higher than his tiara, and his loving martyrsmile, the crown of a nature more benign than his fortune, shone up toward both. Son of the bishop of Nazianzen, and holder of the diocese which was his birthplace, previous to his elevation to the level of the storm in the bishopric of Constantinople, little did he care for bishoprics or high places of any kind,—the desire of his soul being for solitude, quietude, and that silent religion, which should "rather be than seem." But his father's head bent whitely before him, even in the chamber of his brother's death,—and Basil, his beloved friend,

with the weight of love; and Gregory, feeling their tears upon his cheeks, did not count his own, but took up the priestly office. Poor Gregory! not merely as a priest, but as a man, he had a sighing life of it. His student days at Athens, where he and Basil read together poems and philosophies, and holier things, or talked low and misopogonistically of their fellow-student Julian's bearded boding smile, were his happiest days. He says of himself,

As many stones

Were thrown at me, as other men had flowers.

Nor was persecution the worst evil; for friend after friend, beloved after beloved, passed away from before his face, and the voice which charmed them living, spoke brokenly beside their graves,—his funeral orations marked severally the wounds of his heart,—and his genius served, as genius often does, to lay an emphasis on his grief. The passage we shall venture to translate is rather a cry than a song—

Where are my winged words? Dissolved in air.

Where is my flower of youth? All withered. Where

My glory? Vanished. Where the strength I knew
From comely limbs? Disease hath

changed it too, And bent them. Where the riches and

the lands?
God HATH THEM! Yea, and sinners'

snatching hands Have grudged the rest. Where is my

father, mother,
And where my blessed sister, my sweet
brother?

Gone to the grave!—There did remain for me

Alone my fatherland, till destiny, Malignly stirring a black tempest, drove My foot from that last rest. And now I

Estranged and desolate a foreign shore, And drag my mournful life and age all

Throneless and cityless, and childless save

This father-care for children, which I have.

Living from day to day on wandering feet.

Where shall I cast this body? What will greet

My sorrows with an end? What gentle ground

And hosp table grave will wrap me round? Who last my dying eyelids stoop to close—Some saint, the Saviour's friend? or one of those

Who do not know Him? The air interpose,

And scatter these words too.

The return upon the first thought is highly pathetic; and there is a restlessness of anguish about the whole passage, which consecrates it with the cross of nature. His happy Athenian associations gave a colour, unwashed out by tears, to his mind and works. Half apostolical he was, and half scholastical; and while he mused on his bishop's throne, upon the mystic tree of twelve fruits, and the shining of the river of life, he carried, as Milton did, with a gentle and not ungraceful distraction, both hands full of green trailing branches from the banks of the Cephissus, nay, from the very plane-tree which Socrates sat under with Phædrus, when they two talked about beauty to the rising and falling of its leaves. As an orator, he was greater, all must feel if some do not think, than his contemporaries; and the "golden mouth " might confess it meekly. Erasmus compares him to Isocrates, but the unlikeness is obvious: Gregory was not excellent at an artful blowing of the pipes. He spoke grandly, as the wind does, in gusts; and, as in a mighty wind; which combines unequal noises, the creaking of trees and rude swinging of doers as well as the sublime sovereign rush along the valleys, we gather the idea, from his eloquence, less of music than of power. Not that he is cold as the wind is—the metaphor goes no further: Gregory cannot be cold, even by disfavour of his antithetic points. He is various in his oratory, full and rapid in allusion. briefly graphic in metaphor, equally sufficient for indignation or pathos, and gifted peradventure with a keener dagger of sarcasm than should hang in a saint's girdle. His orations

against Julian have all these characteristics, but they are not poetry, and we must pass down lower, and quite over his beautiful letters, to Gregory

the poet. He wrote thirty thousand verses, among which are several long poems, severally defective in a defect common but not necessary to short occasional poems, and lamentable anywhere, a want of unity and completeness. The excellences of his prose are transcribed, with whatever faintness, in his poetry—the exaltation, the devotion, the sweetness, the pathos, even to the playing of satirical power about the graver But although meanings. noble thoughts break up the dulness of the groundwork,—although, with the instinct of greater poets, he bares his heart in his poetry, and the heart is worth baring, still monotony of construction without unity of intention is the most wearisome of monotonies. and, except in the case of a few short poems, we find it everywhere in Gregory. The lack of variety is extended to the cadences, and the pauses fall stiffly "come corpo morto cade." Melodious lines we have often: harmonious passages scarcely ever-the music turning heavily on its own axle, as inadequate to living evolution. The poem on his own life (" De Vitâ suâ") is, in many places, interesting and affecting, yet faulty with all these faults. The poem on Celibacy, which state is commended by Gregory as becometh'a bishop, has occasionally graphic touches, but is dull enough generally to suit the fairest spinster's view of that melancholy subject. If Hercules could have read it, he must have rested in the middle-from which the reader is entreated to forbear the inference that the poem has not been read through by the writer of the present remarks, seeing that that writer marked the grand concluding moment with a white stone, and laid up the memory of it among the chief triumphs, to say nothing of the fortunate deliverances, vitæ suæ. In Gregory's elegiac poems, Fast in marriage (joy unsound!) our ears, at least, are better contented, And be turned round and round

because the sequence of pentameter to hexameter necessarily excludes the various cadence which they yearn for under other circumstances. His anacreontics are sometimes nobly written, with a certain brave recklessness, as if the thoughts despised the measure-and we select from this class a specimen of his poetry, both because three of his hymns have already appeared in the "Athenæum." and because the anacreontic in question includes to a remarkable extent. the various qualities we have attributed to Gregory, not omitting that play of satirical humour with which he delights to ripple the abundant flow of his thoughts. The writer, though also a translator, feels less misgiving than usual in offering to the reader, in such English as is possible, this spirited and beautiful poem.

SOUL AND BODY.

What wilt thou possess or be? O my soul, I ask of thee. What of great, or what of small, Counted precious therewithal? Be it only rare, and want it, I am ready, soul, to grant it. Wilt thou choose to have and hold Lydian Gyges' charm of old, So to rule us with a ring, Turning round the jewelled thing, Hidden by its face concealed, And revealed by its revealed? Or preferrest Midas' fate-He who died in golden state, All things being changed to gold? Of a golden hunger dying, Through a surfeit of "would I"-ing! Wilt have jewels brightly cold, Or may fertile acres please? Or the sheep of many a fold, Camels, oxen, for the wold? Nay! I will not give thee these! These to take thou hast not will, These to give I have not skill; Since I cast earth's cares abroad, That day when I turned to God.

Wouldst a throne, a crown sublime. Bubble blown upon the time? So thou mayest sit to-morrow Looking downward in meek sorrow, Some one walking by thee scorning Who adored thee yester morning, Some malign one? Wilt be bound

As the time turns? Wilt thou catch it, That sweet sickness? and to match it Have babies by the hearth, bewildering? And if I tell thee the best children Are none—what answer?

Wilt thou thunder Thy rhetorics, move the people under? Covetest to sell the laws With no justice in thy cause, And bear on, or else be borne, Before tribunals worthy scorn? Wilt thou shake a javelin rather Breathing war? or wilt thou gather Garlands from the wrestler's ring? Or kill beasts for glorying? Covetest the city's shout, And to be in brass struck out? Cravest thou that shade of dreaming. Passing air of shifting seeming, Rushing of a printless arrow, Clapping echo of a hand? What to those who understand Are to-day's enjoyments narrow Which to-morrow go again, Which are shared with evil men. And of which no man in his dying Taketh aught for softer lying? What then wouldst thou, if thy mood Choose not these? what wilt thou be, O my soul-a deity? A God before the face of God, Standing glorious in His glories, Choral in His angels' chorus?

Go! upon thy wing arise, Plumèd by quick energies, Mount in circles up the skies: And I will bless thy wingèd passion, Help with words thine exaltation, And, like a bird of rapid feather, Outlaunch thee, Soul, upon the ether.

But thou, O fleshly nature, say,
Thou with odours from the clay,
Since thy presence I must have
As a lady with a slave,
What wouldst thou possess or be,
That thy breath may stay with thee?
Nay! I owe thee nought beside,
Though thine hands be open wide.
Would a table suit thy wishes,
Fragrant with sweet oils and dishes
Wrought to subtle niceness? where
Stringed music strokes the air,
And blithe hand-clappings, and the
smooth

Fine postures of the tender youth And virgins wheeling through the dance With an unveiled countenance,—
Joys for drinkers, who love shame, And the maddening wine-cup's flame. Wilt thou such, howe'er decried?
Take them,—and a rope beside!

Nav! this boon I give instead Unto friend insatiated,-May some rocky house receive thee. Self-roofed, to conceal thee chiefly: Or if labour there must lurk, Be it by a short day's work! And for garment, camel's hair, As the righteous clothèd were, Clothe thee! or the bestial skin Adam's bareness hid within,-Or some green thing from the way, Leaf of herb, or branch of vine, Swelling, purpling as it may, Fearless to be drunk for wine! Spread a table there beneath thee, Which a sweetness shall upbreathe thee, And which the dearest earth is giving, Simple present to all living! When that we have placed thee near it, We will feed thee with glad spirit. Wilt thou eat? soft, take the bread, Oaten cake, if that bested; Salt will season all aright, And thine own good appetite, Which we measure not, nor fetter: 'Tis an uncooked condiment, Famine's self the only better. Wilt thou drink? why, here doth bubble Water from a cup unspent, Followed by no tipsy trouble, Pleasure sacred from the grape! Wilt thou have it in some shape More like luxury? we are No grudgers of wine-vinegar! But if all will not suffice thee, And thou covetest to draw In that pitcher with a flaw, Brimful pleasures heaven denies thee! Go, and seek out, by that sign, Other help than this of mine! For me, I have not leisure so To warm thee, sweet, my household foe, Until, like a serpent frozen, New-maddened with the heat, thou loosen

Thy rescued fang within mine heart!

Wilt have measureless delights of gold-roofed palaces, and sights From pictured or from sculptured art, With motion near their life; and splendour Of bas-relief, with tracery tender, And varied and contrasted hues? Wilt thou have, as nobles use, Broidered robes to flow about thee? Jewelled fingers? Need we doubt thee? Jawelled fingers? Need we doubt thee? I most, who, of all beauty, know It must be inward, to be so!

And thus I speak to mortals low, Living for the hour, and o'er Its shadow, seeing nothing more: But for those of nobler bearing, Who live more worthily of wearing A portion of the heavenly nature-To low estate of clayey creature, See, I bring the beggar's meed, Nutriment beyond the need! O, beholder of the Lord, Prove on me the flaming sword! Be mine husbandman, to nourish Holy plants, that words may flourish Of which mine enemy would spoil me, Using pleasurehood to foil me! Lead me closer to the tree Of all life's eternity; Which, as I have pondered, is The knowledge of God's greatnesses: Light of One, and shine of Three. Unto Whom all things that be Flow and tend!

Whoever on the earth is wise Will speak unto himself: and who Such inner converse would eschew,—We say perforce of that poor wight, "He lived in vain!" and if aright, It is not the worst word we might.

AMPHILOCHIUS, bishop of Iconium, was beloved and much appreciated by Gregory, and often mentioned in his writings. Few of the works of Amphilochius are extant, and of these only one is a poem. It is a didactic epistle to Seleucus, "On the Right Direction of his Studies and Life," and has been attributed to Gregory Nazianzen by some writers upon very inadequate evidence,—that adduced (the similar phraseology which conveys, in this poem and a poem of Gregory's, the catalogue of canonical scriptures), being as easily explained by the imitation of one poet, as by the identity of two. They differ, moreover, upon ground more important than phraseology: Amphilochius appearing to reject, or at least to receive doubtfully, Jude's epistle and the Second of Peter. And there is a harsh force in the whole poem, which does not remind us of our Nazianzen, while it becomes, in the course of dissuading Seleucus from the amusements of the amphitheatre, graphic and effective. We hear, through the description, the grinding of the tigers' teeth, the sympathy of the people with the tigers showing still more savage.

They sit unknowing of these agonies, Spectators at a show. When a man flies From a beast's jaw, they groan, as if at

They missed the ravenous pleasure, like the beast,

And sat there vainly. When, in the next spring,

The victim is attained, and, uttering
The deep roar or quick shriek between
the fangs,

Beats on the dust the passion of his pangs, All pity dieth in that glaring look; They clap to see the blood run like a

brook;
They stare with hungry eyes, which tears should fill.

And cheer the beasts on with their soul's good will;

And wish more victims to their maw, and urge

And lash their fury, as they shared the surge,

Gnashing their teeth, like beasts, on flesh of men.

There is an appalling reality in this picture. The epistle consists of 333 lines, which we mention specifically, because the poet takes advantage of the circumstance to illustrate or enforce an important theological doctrine:—

Three hundred lines, three decads, monads three,
Comprise my poem. Love the Trinity.

It would be almost a pain, and quite a regret, to pass from this fourth century without speaking a word which belongs to it—a word which rises to our lips, a word worthy of honour—Heliodorus. Though a bishop and an imaginative writer, his "Æthiopica" has no claim on our attention, either by right of Christianity or poetry; and yet we may be pardoned on our part for love's sake, and on account of the false position into which, by negligence of readers or insufficiency of translators, his beautiful romance has fallen, if we praise it heartily and faithfully even here. Our tears praised it long ago, our recollection does so now, and its own pathetic eloquence and picturesque descriptiveness are ripe for any praise. It has, besides, a vivid Arabian Night charm, almost as charming as

Scheherazade herself, suggestive of an Arabian Night story drawn out "in many a winding bout," and not merely on the ground of extemporaneous loving and methodical (must we say it?) lying. In good sooth—no, not in good sooth, but in evil leasing-every hero and heroine of them all, from Abou Hassan to "the divine Chariclæa." does lie most vehemently and abundantly by gift of nature and choice of author, whether bishop or sultana. "It is," as Pepys observes philosophically of the comparative destruction of gin-shops and churches in the Great Fire of London, " pretty to observe" how they all lie. And although the dearest of story-tellers, our own Chaucer, has told us that "some leasing is, of which there cometh none advauntage to no wight," even that species is used by them magnanimously in its turn, for the bare glory's sake, and without caring for the "advauntage." With equal liberality, but more truth, we write down the bishop of Tricca's romance charming, and wish the charm of it (however we may be out of place in naming him among poets) upon any poet who has not vet felt it, and whose eyes, giving honour, may wander over these Remarks. The poor bishop thought as well of his book as we do, perhaps better; for when commanded, under ecclesiastical censure, to burn it or give up his bishopric, he gave up the bishopric. And who blames Heliodorus? He thought well of his romance; he was angry with those who did not; he was weak with the love of it. Let whosoever blames, speak low. Romance-writers are not educated for martyrs, and the exacted martyrdom was very very hard. Think of that English bishop who burnt his hand by an act of volition-only his hand, and which loved truth; and he loved beyond was sure to be burnt afterwards; and how he was praised for it! Heliodorus had to do with a dearer thing—handwriting, not hands. Authors will pardon him, if bishops do not,

Nonnus of Panopolis, the poet of the "Dionysiaca," a work of some twenty-two thousand verses, on some twenty-two thousand subjects shaken together, flourished, as people say of many a dry-rooted soul, at the commencement of the fifth century. He was converted from paganism. but we are sorry to make the melancholy addition, that he was never converted from the "Dionysiaca." The only Christian poem we owe to him-a paraphrase, in hexameters, of the apostle John's gospeldoes all that a bald verbosity and an obscure tautology can do or undo, to quench the divinity of that divine narrative. The two wellknown words, bearing on their brief vibration the whole passion of a world saved through pain from pain, are thus traduced :-

They answered Him "Come and behold." Then I esus Himself groaned, Dropping strange tears from eyes unused to weeb.

"Unused to weep!" Was it so of the Man of Sorrows? Oh, obtuse poet! We had translated the opening passage of the Paraphrase, and laid it by for transcription, but are repelled. Enough is said. Nonnus was never converted from the " Dionysiaca."

Synesius of Cyrene learnt Plato's philosophy so well of Hypatia of Alexandria at the commencement of the fifth century, or rather before. that, to the obvious honour of that fair and learned teacher, he never, as bishop of Ptolemais, could attain to unlearning it. He did not wish to be bishop of Ptolemais: he had divers objections to the throne and the domination. He loved his dogs, he loved his wife; he loved Hypatia and Plato as well as he all things, under the womanly instruction of the former, to have his own way. He was a poet, too; the chief poet, we do not hesitate to record our opinion,-the chief, for true and natural gifts, of all our Greek Christian poets; and it was his choice to pray lyrically between the dew and the cloud rather than preach dogmatically between the he retained his wife and his Platondoxies. If Gregory shrank from the episcopal office through a meek self-distrust and a yearning for solitude. Synesius repulsed the invitation to it through an impatience of control over heart and life, and for the earnest joy's sake of thinking out his own thought in the huntinggrounds, with no deacon or disciple astuter than his dog to watch the thought in his face, and trace it backward or forward, as the case might be, into something more or less than what was orthodox. Therefore he, a man of many and wandering thoughts, refused the bishopric. not weepingly, indeed, as Gregory did, nor feigning madness with another of the "nolentes episcopari" of that earnest period,-but with a sturdy enunciation of resolve, more likely to be effectual, of keeping his wife by his side as long as he lived. and of doubting as long as he pleased to doubt upon the resurrection of the body. But Synesius was a man of genius, and of all such true energies as are taken for granted in the name; and the very sullenness of his " nav " being expressive to grave judges of the faithfulness of his "yea and amen." he was considered too noble a man not to be made a bishop of in his own despite, and on his own terms. The fact proves the latitude of discipline, and even of doctrine, permitted to the churches of that age; and it does not appear that the church at Ptolemais suffered any wrong as its result, seeing that Synesius, recovering from the shock militant of his ordination, in the course of which his ecclesiastical friends had "laid hands upon him" in the roughest sense of the word, performed his new duties willingly; was no sporting bishop otherwise than as a "fisher of men"—sent his bow to the dogs, and his dogs

as ever any importance became attached to the authenticity of his own. And if, according to the bond, isms, we may honour him by the inference, that he did so for conscience' sake still more than love's. since the love was inoperative in other matters. For spiritual fervour and exaltation, he has honour among men and angels; and however intent upon spiritualising away the most glorified material body from "the heaven of his invention," he held fast and earnestly, as anybody's clenched hand could a horn of the altar, the Homoousion doctrine of the Christian heaven, and other chief doctrines emphasising the divine sacrifice. But this poet has a higher place among poets than this bishop among bishops; the highest, we must repeat our conviction, of all yet named or to be named by us as "Greek Christian poets." Little, indeed, of his poetry has reached us, but this little is great in a nobler sense than of quantity; and when of his odes, Anacreontic for the most part, we cannot say praisefully that "they smell of Anacreon," it is because their fragrance is holier and more abiding: it is because the human soul burning in the censer effaces from our spiritual perceptions the attar of a thousand rose-trees whose roots are in Teos. These odes have, in fact, a wonderful rapture and ecstasy. And if we find in them the phraseology of Plato, or Plotinus, for he leant lovingly to the later Platonists,nay, if we find in them oblique references to the outworn mythology of paganism, even so have we beheld the mixed multitude of unconnected motes wheeling, rising in a great sunshine, as the sunshine were a motive energy,—and even so the burning, adoring poet-spirit sweeps upward the motes of worldfancies (as if, being in the world, their tendency was Godward) upto Jericho, that nearest Coventry to ward in a strong stream of sunny Ptolemais, silencing his "staunch light, while she rushes into the preshound's authentic voice" as soon ence of "The Alone." We say the spirit significantly in speaking of this poet's aspiration. His is an ecstasy of abstract intellect, of pure spirit, cold though impetuous; the heart does not beat in it, nor is the human voice heard; the poet is true to the heresy of the ecclesiastic, and there is no resurrection of the body. We shall attempt a translation of the ninth ode, closer if less graceful and polished than Mr.Boyd's, helping our hand to courage by the persuasion that the genius of its poetry must look through the thickest blanket of our dark.

Well-beloved and glory-laden, Born of Solyma's pure maiden! I would hymn Thee, blessed Warden, Driving from Thy Father's garden Blinking serpent's crafty lust, With his bruised head in the dust! Down Thou camest, low as earth, Bound to those of mortal birth; Down Thou camest, low as hell, Where shepherd-Death did tend and keep A thousand nations like to sheep While weak with age old Hades fell Shivering through his dark to view Thee, And the Dog did backward yell With jaws all gory to let through Thee! So, redeeming from their pain Choirs of disembodied ones Thou didst lead whom Thou didst gather, Upward in ascent again, With a great hymn to the Father. Upward to the pure white thrones! King, the dæmon tribes of air Shuddered back to feel Thee there! And the holy stars stood breathless, Trembling in their chorus deathless; A low laughter filled ether-Harmony's most subtle sire From the seven strings of his lyre Stroked a measured music hither-Io pæan! victory! Smiled the star of morning-he Who smileth to foreshow the day! Smilèd Hesperus the golden, Who smileth soft for Venus gay! While that horned glory holden Brimful from the fount of fire, The white moon, was leading higher In a gentle pastoral wise All the nightly deities! Yea, and Titan threw abroad The far shining of his hair 'Neath Thy footsteps holy-fair, Owning Thee the Son of God; The Mind artificer of all, And his own fire's original!

And Thou upon Thy wing of will Mounting,—Thy God-foot uptill The neck of the blue firmament,—Soaring, didst alight content Where the spirit-spheres were singing, And the fount of good was springing, In the silent heaven!
Where Time is not with his tide Ever running, never weary, Drawing earth-born things aside Against the rocks; nor yet are given The plagues death-bold that ride the dreary
Tost matter-depths. Eternity

Tost matter-depths. Eternity
Assumes the places which they yield!
Not aged, howsoe'er she held
Her crown from everlastingly—
At once of youth, at once of eld,
While in that mansion which is hers
To God and gods she ministers!

How the poet rises in his "singing clothes" embroidered all over with the mythos and the philosophy! Yet his eye is to the Throne: and we must not call him half a heathen by reason of a Platonic idiosyncrasy, seeing that the esoteric of the most suspicious turnings of his phraseology is "Glory to the true God." For another ode, Paris should be here to choose it—we are puzzled among the beautiful. Here is one with a thought in it from Gregory's prose, which belongs to Synesius by right of conquest:—

O my deathless, O my blessed, Maid-born, glorious Son confessed, O my Christ of Solyma! I who earliest learnt to play This measure for Thee, fain would bring Its new sweet tune to citern-string—Be propitious, O my King! Take this music which is mine Anthem'd from the songs divine!

We will sing Thee, deathless One, God Himself and God's great Son-Of sire of endless generations, Son of manifold creations! Nature mutually endued. Wisdom in infinitude! God, before the angels burning---Corpse, among the mortals mourning What time Thou wast poured mild From an earthy vase defiled. Magi with fair arts besprent. At Thy new star's orient, Trembled inly, wondered wild, Questioned with their thoughts abroad-What then is the new-born child? Who the hidden God?

God, or corpse, or king? Bring your gifts, oh hither bring Myrrh for rite-for tribute, gold-Frankincense for sacrifice! God! Thine incense take and hold! King! I bring thee gold of price! Myrrh with tomb will harmonise!

For Thou, entombed, hast purified Earthly ground and rolling tide, And the path of dæmon nations, And the free air's fluctuations, And the depth below the deep! Thou God, helper of the dead, Low as Hades didst Thou tread! Thou King, gracious aspect keep, Take this music which is mine, Anthem'd from the songs divine.

EUDOCIA—in the twenty-first year of the fifth century-wife of Theodosius, and empress of the world, thought good to extend her sceptre—

> (Hac claritate gemina O gloriosa fœmina!)-

over Homer's poems, and cento-ise them into an epic on the Saviour's life. She was the third fair woman accused of sacrificing the world for an apple, having moved her husband to wrath, by giving away his imperial gift of a large one to her own philosophic friend Paulinus; and being unhappily more learned than her two predecessors in the sin, in the course of her exile to Jerusalem, she took ghostly comfort, by separating Homer's εἴδωλον from There she sat among his $\phi \rho \dot{\epsilon} \nu \epsilon s$. the ruins of the holy city, addressing herself most unholily, with whatever good intentions and delicate fingers, to pulling Homer's gold to pieces bit by bit, even as the ladies of France devoted what remained to them of virtuous energy "pour parfiler" under the benignant gaze of Louis Quinze. She, too, who had no right of the purple to literary ineptitude—she, born no empress of Rome, but daughter of Leontius the Athenian, what had she to do with Homer, "parfilant"? Was it not enough for Homer that he was turned once, like her own cast imperial mantle, by Apolinarius into a Tewish epic, but that he must be unpicked again by Eudocia for a Christian epic? The reader, The Homeric cento has been actually

who has heard enough of centos, will not care to hear how she did it. That she did it was too much; and the deed recoiled. For mark the poetical justice of her destiny; let all readers mark it, and all writers, especially female writers, who may be half as learned, and not half as fair,-that although she wrote many poems, one "On the Persian War," whose title and merit are recorded, not one, except this cento, has survived. The obliterative sponge, we hear of in Æschylus, has washed out every verse except this cento's "damned spot." This remains. This is called Eudocia! this stands for the daughter of Leontius, and this only in the world! O fair mischief! she

is punished by her hand.

And yet, are we born critics any more than she was born an empress, that we should not have a heart? and is our heart stone, that it should not wax soft within us while the vision is stirred "between our eyelids and our eyes," of this beautiful Athenais, baptized once by Christian waters, and once by human tears, into Eudocia, the imperial mourner? —this learned pupil of a learned father, crowned once by her golden hair, and once by her golden crown, yet praised more for poetry and learning than for beauty and greatness by such grave writers as Socrates and Evagrius, the ecclesiastical historians?—this world's empress, pale with the purple of her palaces, an exile even on the throne from her Athens. and soon twice an exile, from father's grave and husband's bosom? We relent before such a vision. And what if, relentingly, we declare her innocent of the Homeric cento? -what if we find her "a whipping boy" to take the blame?-what if we write down a certain Proba "improba," and bid her bear it? For Eudocia having been once a mark to slander, may have been so again; and Falconia Proba, having committed centoism upon Virgil, must have been capable of anything. attributed to her by certain critics, with whom we would join in all earnestness our most sour voices, gladly, for Eudocia's sake, who is closely dear to us, and malignly for Proba's, who was "improba" without our help. So shall we impute evil to only one woman, and she not an Athenian; while our worst wish, even to her, assumes this innoxious shape, that she had used a distaff rather than a stylus, though herself and the yet more "Sleeping Beauty" had owned one horoscope between them! Amen to our wish! A busy distaff and a sound sleep to Proba!

And now, that golden-haired, golden-crowned daughter of Leontius, for whom neither the much learning nor the much sorrow drove Hesperus from her sovran eyes—let her pass on unblenched. Be it said of her, softly as she goes, by all gentle readers—"She is innocent, whether for centos or for apples! She wrote only such Christian Greek poems as Christians and poets might rejoice to read, but which perished with her beauty, as

being of one seed with it."

Midway in the sixth century we encounter Paul Silentiarius, called so in virtue of the office held by him in the court of Justinian, and chiefly esteemed for his descriptive poem on the Byzantine church of St. Sophia, which, after the Arian conflagration, was rebuilt gorgeously by the emperor. This church was not dedicated to a female saint. according to the supposition of many persons, but to the second person of the Trinity, the ayia σοφία—holy wisdom; while the poem being recited in the imperial presence, and the poet's gaze often forgetting to rise higher than the imperial smile. Paul Silentiarius dwelt less on the divine dedication and the spiritual uses of the place, than on the glory of the dedicator and the beauty of the structure. We hesitate, moreover, to grant to his poem the praise which has been freely granted to it by more capable critics, of its power to realise

this beauty of structure to the eyes of the reader. It is highly elaborate and artistic; but the elaboration and art appear to us architectural far more than picturesque. is no sequency, no congruity, no keeping, no light and shade. The description has reference to the working as well as to the work, to the materials as well as to the work-The eyes of the reader are suffered to approach the whole only in analysis, or rather in analysis analysed. Every part, part by part, is recounted to him excellently well -is brought close till he may touch it with his eyelashes; but when he seeks for the general effect, it is in pieces-there is none of it. Byron shows him more in the passing words-

I have beheld Sophia's bright roofs swell Their glittering mass i' the sun—

than Silentiarius in all his poem. Yet the poem has abundant merit in diction and harmony; and, besides higher noblenesses, the pauses are modulated with an artfulness not commonly attained by these later Greeks, and the ear exults in an unaccustomed rhythmetic pomp which the inward critical sense is inclined to murmur at, as an expletive verbosity.

Whoever looketh with a mortal eye To heaven's emblazoned forms, not steadfastly

With unreverted neck can bear to mea-

sure
That meadow-round of star-apparelicd pleasure,

But drops his eyelids to the verdant hill, Yearning to see the river run at will, With flowers on each side,—and the

ripening corn,
And grove thick set with trees, and
flocks at morn

Leaping against the dews,—and olives twined,

And green vine-branches, trailingly inclined,—

And the blue calmness skimmed by drip

And the blue calmness skimmed by dripping oar

Along the Golden Horn.

But if he bring
His foot across this threshold, never more
Would he withdraw it; fain, with wandering

Moist eyes, and ever-turning head, to stay,

Since all satiety is driven away
Beyond the noble structure. Su

Beyond the noble structure. Such a fane
Of blameless beauty hath our Cæsar

raised

By God's perfective grace, and not in vain!

O emperor, these labours we have praised, Draw down the glorious Christ's perpetual smile;

For thou, the high-peaked Ossa didst

not pile

Upon Olympus' head, nor Pelion throw Upon the neck of Ossa, opening so The ether to the steps of mortals! no! Having achieved a work more high than hope,

Thou didst not need these mountains as

a slope

Whereby to scale the heaven! Wings take thee thither
From purest piety to highest ether.

The following passage, from the same "Description," is hard to turn into English, through the accumulative riches of the epithets. Greek words atone for their vainglorious redundancy by their beauty, but we cannot think so of these our own pebbles:—

Who will unclose me Homer's sounding

And sing the marble mead that oversweeps

The mighty walls and pavements spread

The mighty walls and pavements spread around

Of this tall temple, which the sun has crowned?

The hammer with its iron tooth was loosed
Into Carystus' summit green, and bruised

Into Carystus' summit green, and bruised The Phrygian shoulder of the dædal stone;—

This marble, coloured after roses fused In a white air, and that, with flowers thereon

thereon
Both purple and silver, shining tenderly!
And that which in the broad fair Nile

sank low
The barges to their edge, the porphyry's
glow

Sown thick with little stars! and thou mayst see

The green stone of Laconia glitter free!
And all the Carian hill's deep bosom brings,

Streaked bow-wise, with a livid white and red,—

And all the Lydian chasm keeps covered, A hueless blossom with a ruddier one in its proportions, sounds strangely.

Soft mingled! all, besides, the Libyan sun

Warms with his golden splendour, till he make

A golden yellow glory for his sake,

Along the roots of the Maurusian height !
And all the Celtic mountains give to sight

From crystal clefts: black marbles dappled fair

With milky distillations here and there! And all the onyx yields in metal-shine Of precious greenness!—all that land of thine,

Ætolia, hath on even plains engendered But not on mountain-tops,—a marble rendered

Here nigh to green, of tints which

emeralds use, Here with a sombre purple in the hues! Some marbles are like new-dropt snow, and some

Alight with blackness!—Beauty's rays have come,

So congregate, beneath this holy dome!

And thus the poet takes us away from the church and dashes our senses and admirations down these marble quarries! Yet it is right for us to admit the miracle of a poem made out of stones! and when he spoke of unclosing Homer's lips on such a subject, he was probably thinking of Homer's ships, and meant to intimate that one catalogue was as good for him as another.

JOHN GEOMETRA arose in no propitious orient probably with the seventh century, although the time of his "elevation" appears to be uncertain within a hundred years.

He riseth slowly, as his sullen car Had all the weights of sleep and death hung on it.

Plato, refusing his divine fellowship to anyone who was not a geometrician or who was a poet, might have kissed our Johannes, who was not divine, upon both cheeks, in virtue of his other name and in vice of his verses. He was the author of certain hymns to the Virgin Mary, as accumulative of epithets and admirations as ten of her litanies, inclusive of a pious compliment, which, however geometrically exact in its proportions, sounds strangely.

O health to thee! new living car of the sky, Afire on the wheels of four virtues at once!

O health to thee! Seat, than the cherubs more high,

More pure than the seraphs, more broad than the thrones!

Towards the close of the last hymn, the exhausted poet empties back something of the ascription into his own lap, by a remarkable "mihi quoque."

O health to me, royal one! if there be-

Any grace to my singing, that grace is from thee.

O health to me, royal one! if in my song Thou hast pleasure, oh, thine is the grace of the glee!

We may mark the time of George Pisida, about thirty years deep in the seventh century. He has been confounded with the rhetorical archbishop of Nicomedia, but held the office of scævophylax, only lower than the highest, in the metropolitan church of St. Sophia, and was a poet. singing half in the church and half the court, and considerably nearer to the feet of the Emperor Heraclius than can please us in any measure. Hoping all things, however, in our poetical charity, we are willing to hope even this, that the man whom Heraclius carried about with him as a singing-man when he went to fight the Persians, and who sang and recited accordingly, and provided notes of admiration for all the imperial notes of interrogation, and gave his admiring poems the appropriate and suggestive name of acroases—auscultations, things intended to be heard, - might nevertheless love Heraclius the fightingman, not slave-wise or flatter-wise, but man-wise or dog-wise, in good truth, and up to the brim of his praise; and so hoping, we do not dash the praise down as a libation to the infernal task-masters. Still it is an impotent conclusion to a free-hearted poet's musing on the "Six Days' Work," to wish God's creation under the sceptre of his particular friend! It looks as if

the particular friend had an ear like Dionysius, and the poet—ah, the poet!—a mark as of a chain upon his brow in the shadow of his court laurel.

We shall not revive the question agitated among his contemporaries. whether Euripides or George Pisida wrote the best iambics; but that our George knew the secret beauty, and that, having noble thoughts, he could utter them nobly. is clear, despite of Heraclius. That he is, besides, unequal; often coldly perplexed when he means to be ingenious, only violent when he seeks to be inspired; that he premeditates ecstasies, and is inclined to the attitudes of the orators; in brief, that he "not only" (and not seldom) "sleeps but snores"—are facts as true of him as the praise is. His Hexaëmeron, to which we referred as his chief work, is rather a meditation or rhythmetical speech upon the finished creation, than a retrospection of the six days; and also there is more of Plato in it than of Moses. It has many fine things, and whole passages of no ordinary eloquence, though difficult to separate and select.

Whatever eyes seek God to view His Light,

As far as they behold Him close in night! Whoever searcheth with insatiate balls Th' abysmal glare, or gazeth on Heaven's walls

Against the fire-disc of the sun, the same According to the vision he may claim, Is dazzled from his sense. What soul of

Is called sufficient to view onward thus The way whereby the sun's light came to us?

O distant Presence in fixed motion!
Known

To all men, and inscrutable to one:

Perceived — uncomprehended! unexplained

To all the spirits, yet by each attained, Because its God-sight is Thy work! O Presence.

Whatever holy greatness of Thine essence Lie virtue-hidden, Thou hast given our eyes

The vision of Thy plastic energies— Not-shown in angels only (those create All fiery-hearted, in a mystic state Of bodiless body) but, if order be Of natures more sublime than they or we. In highest Heaven, or mediate ether, or This world now seen, or one that came before

Or one to come, -quick in Thy purpose, -there!

Working in fire and water, earth and

In every tuneful star, and tree, and bird-

In all the swimming, creeping life unheard,

In all green herbs, and chief of all, in

There are other poems of inferior length, "On the Persian War," in three books, or, alas, "auscultations." -"The Heracliad," again on the Persian war, and in two (of course) auscultations again, - "Against Severus," "On the Vanity of Life," "The War of the Huns," and others. From the "Vanity of Life," which has much beauty and force, we shall take a last specimen :-

Some yearn to rule the state, to sit above. And touch the cares of hate as near as

Some their own reason for tribunal take, And for all thrones the humblest prayers they make;

Some love the orator's vainglorious art,-The wise love silence and the hush of heart,-

Some to ambition's spirit-curse are fain. That golden apple with a bloody stain; While some do battle in her face (more

Of noble ends) and conquer strife with strife:

And while your groaning tables gladden these,

Satiety's quick chariot to disease, Hunger the wise man helps, to water,

And light wings to the dreams about his

The truth becomes presently obvious, that-

The sage o'er all the world his sceptre And bringing myrrh, the highestwaves.

And earth is common ground to thrones and graves.

John Damascenus, to whom we should not give by any private impulse of admiration the title of Chrysorrhoas, accorded to him by his times, lived at Damascus, his But give Thy feet to me instead,

native city, early in the eighth century, holding an unsheathed sword of controversy until the point drew down the lightning. He retired before the affront rather than the injury; and in company with his beloved friend and fellow poet, Cosmas of Jerusalem (whose poetical remains the writer of these Remarks has vainly sought the sight of, and therefore can only, as by hearsay, ascribe some value to them), hid the remnant of his life in the monastery of Saba, where Phocas of the twelfth century looked upon the tomb of either poet. John Damascenus wrote several acrostics on the chief festivals of the churches, which are not much better, although very much longer, than acrostics need be. When he writes out of his heart, without looking to the first letters of his verses—as, indeed, in his Anacreontic his eyes are too dim for iota hunting, —he is another man, and almost a strong man; for the heart being sufficient to speak, we want no Delphic oracle—" Pan is NOT dead." In our selection from the Anacreontic hymn, the tears seem to trickle audibly: we welcome them as a "as Siloa's Castalia, or, rather, brook," flowing by an oracle more divine than any Grecian one:-

From my lips in their defilement, From my heart in its beguilement. From my tongue which speaks not fair, From my soul stained everywhere, O my Jesus, take my prayer! Spurn me not for all it says, Not for words and not for ways. Not for shamelessness endued! Make me brave to speak my mood, O my Jesus, as I would! Or teach me, which I rather seek, What to do and what to speak. I have sinned more than she,

Who learning where to meet with Thee. priced,

Anointed bravely, from her knee. Thy blessed feet accordingly, My God, my Lord, my Christ! As Thou saidest not "Depart," To that suppliant from her heart, Scorn me not, O Word, that art The gentlest one of all words said! That tenderly I may them kiss And clasp them close, and never miss With over-dropping tears, as free And precious as that myrrh could be, T' anoint them bravely from my knee! Wash me with my tears: draw nigh me, That their salt may purify me. Thou remit my sins who knowest All the sinning to the lowest-Knowest all my wounds, and seest All the stripes Thyself decreest; Yea, but knowest all my faith, Seest all my force to death, Hearest all my wailings low, That mine evil should be so! Nothing hidden but appears In Thy knowledge, O Divine, O Creator, Saviour mine-Not a drop of falling tears, Not a breath of inward moan, Not a heart-beat—which is gone!

After this deep pathos of Christianity, we dare not say a word; we dare not even praise it as poetry: our heart is stirred, and not "idly." The only sound which can fitly succeed the cry of the contrite soul is that of Divine condonation or of angelic rejoicing. Let us, who are sorrowful still, be silent too.

Although doubts, as broad as four hundred years, separate the earliest and latest period talked of as the age of Simeon Metaphrastes by those "viri illustrissimi" the classical critics, we may set him down, without much peril to himself or us, at the close of the tenth century, or very early in the eleventh. He is chiefly known for his "Lives of the Saints," which have been lifted up as a mark both for honour and dishonour; which Psellus hints at as a favourite literature of the angels, which Leo Allatius exalts as chafing the temper of the heretics, and respecting which we, in an exemplary serenity, shall straightway accede to one-half of the opinion of Bellarmine-that the work speaketh not as things actually happened, but as they might have happened-" non ut res gestæ fuerant, sed ut geri potuerant." Our half of this weighty opinion is the first clause-we demur upon "ut geri potuerant,"-and we need not go further than the former

the term "metaphrases," applied to the saintly biographies in otherwise a doubtful sense, and worn obliquely upon the sleeve of the biographer Metaphrastes, in no doubtful token of his skill in metamorphosing things as they were into things as they might have been. And Simeon having received from Constantinople the honour of his birth within her walls, and returning to her the better honour of the distinctions and usefulness of his life.—so writeth Psellus, his encomiast, with a graceful turn of thought,—expired in an "odour of sanctity" befitting the biographer of all the saints,—breathing out from his breathless remains such an incense of celestial sweetness, that if it had not been for the maladroitness of certain unfragrant persons whose desecration of the next tomb acted instantly as a stopper, the whole earth might at this day be metaphrased to our nostrils, as steeped in an attar-gul of Eden or Ede!we might be dwelling in a phœnixnest at this day. Through the maladroitness, however, in question, there is lost to us every sweeter influence from the life and death of Simeon Metaphrastes than may result from the lives and deaths of his saints, and from other works of his, whether commentaries, orations, or poems; and we cannot add that the aroma from his writings bears any proportion in value to the fragrance from his sepulchre. Little of his poetry has reached us, and we are satisfied with the limit. There were three Simeons, who did precede our Simeon, as the world knoweth, and whose titles were Stylitæ or Columnarii, because it pleased them in their saintly volition to take the highest place and live out their natural lives supernaturally, each upon the top of a column. Peradventure the columns which our Simeon refused to live upon conspired against his poetry: peradventure it is on their account that we find ourselves between two alphabetic acrostics, written solemnto win a light of commentary for ly by his hand, and take up one

wherein every alternate line begins with a letter of the alphabet; its companion in the couplet being left to run behind it, out of livery and sometimes out of breath. Will the public care to look upon such a curiosity? Will our verse-writers care to understand what harm may be done by a conspiration of columns—gods and men quite on one side? And will candid readers care to confess at last, that there is an earnestness in the poem, acrostic as it is,—a leaning to beauty's side,—which is above the acrosticism? Let us try:—

Ah, tears upon mine eyelids, sorrow on mine heart.

I bring Thee soul-repentance, Creator as Thou art!

Bounding joyous actions, deep as arrows

Pleasures self-revolving, issue into woe!

Creatures of our mortal, headlong rush to sin:

I have seen them; of them—ah me,— I have been!

Duly pitying Spirits, from your spiritframe,

Bring your cloud of weeping,—worthy of the same!

Else I would be bolder; if that light of Thine,

Jesus, quell the evil, let it on me shine! Fail me truth, is living, less than death forlorn,

When the sinner readeth—" better be unborn?"

God, I raise toward Thee both eyes of my heart,

With a sharp cry—"Help me!"—while mine hopes depart.

Help me! Death is bitter, all hearts com-• prehend; But I fear beyond it—end beyond the

end.

Inwardly behold me, how my soul is

black:
Sympathise in gazing, do not spurn me
back!

Knowing that Thy pleasure is not to destroy,

That Thou fain wouldst save me—this is all my joy.

Lo, the lion, hunting spirits in their deep, (Stand beside me!) roareth—(help me!) nears to leap!

Mayst Thou help me, Master: Thou art pure alone,

Thou alone art sinless, one Christ on a throne.

Nightly deeds I loved them, hated day's instead;

Hence this soul-involving darkness on mine head.

O Word, Who constrainest things estranged and curst,

If Thy hand can save me that work

If Thy hand can save me, that work were the first!

Pensive o'er my sinning, counting all its ways,

Terrors shake me, waiting adequate dismays.

Quenchless glories many, hast Thou many a rod— Thou, too, hast Thy measures. Can I

bear Thee, God?
Rend away my counting from my soul's

decline,
Show me of the portion of those saved

of Thine! Slow drops of my weeping to Thy mercy run:

Let its rivers wash me, by that mercy won!

Tell me what is worthy, in our dreary now, As the future glory? (madness!) what, as Thou?

Union, oh, vouchsafe me to Thy fold beneath,

Lest the wolf across me gnash his gory teeth!

View me, judge me gently! spare me,
Master bland,
Brightly lift Thine eyelids, kindly

stretch Thine hand!
Winged and choral angels! 'twixt my

spirit lone, And all deathly visions, interpose your

own!
Yea, my Soul, remember death and woe inwrought—

After-death affliction, wringing earth's to nought!

Zone me, Lord, with graces! Be foundations built

Underneath me; save me! as Thou know'st and wilt!

The omission of our X (in any case too sullen a letter to be employed in the service of an acrostic) has permitted us to write line for line with the Greek; and we are able to infer, to the honour of the Greek poet, that, although he did not live upon a column, he was not far below one, in the virtue of self-mortification. We are tempted to accord him some more gracious and serious justice, by breaking away a passage from his "Planctus Maria," the lament of Mary on embracing the Lord's

body; and giving a moment's pose and achievement, than any versified matter we have looked

upon from this metaphrastic hand:— "O, uncovered corse, yet Word of the Living One! self-doomed to be uplifted on the cross for the drawing of all men unto Thee, what member of Thine hath no wound? O my blessed brows, embraced by the thorn-wreath which is pricking at my heart! O beautiful and priestly One, Who hadst not where to lay Thine head and rest, and now wilt lay it only in the Jacob said, a lion's sleep! Ocheeks turned to the smiter! O lips, new hive for bees, yet fresh from the sharpgall! O mouth, wherein was no guile, vet betraved by the traitor's kiss! O hand, creative of man, yet nailed to the cross, and since, stretched out unto Hades, with help for walking on the deep to hallow the waters of nature! O me, my Son! here, but only Nicodemus, to lift Thee from the cross, heavily, heavily, and lay Thee in these mother-arms, which bore Thee long ago, in Thy babyhood, and were glad then? These hands, which swaddled Thee then, let them bind Thy grave-clothes now. And yet,—O bitter funerals! ---O Giver of life from the dead, liest Thou dead before mine eyes? Must I, who said 'hush' beside Thy cradle, wail this passion upon in Thy first bath, must I drop on Thee these hotter tears? I, who raised Thee high in my maternal arms,but then Thou leapedst,-then Thou springedst up in Thy child-play!"

It is better to write so than to insight into a remarkable composi- stand upon a column. And, altion, which, however deprived of though the passage does, both genits poetical right of measure, is, in erally and specifically, in certain of fact, nearer to a poem, both in pur- its ideas, recall the antithetic eloquence of that Gregory Nazianzen before whom this Simeon must be dumb, we have touched his "oration." so called, nearer than our subject could permit us to do any of Gregory's, because the "Planctus" involves an imagined situation, is poetical in its design. Moreover, we must prepare to look downwards: the poets were descending from the gorgeous majesty of the hexameter and the severe simplicity of iambics, down through the mediate versus politici, a loose metre, adapted to tomb, resting there; sleeping, as the popular ear, to the lowest deep of a "measured prose,"—which has been likened, but which we will not liken, to the blank verse of our ness of vinegar and bitterness of times. Presently, we may offer an example from Psellus of a prose acrostic—the reader being delighted with the prospect! "A whole silver threepence, mistress."

MICHAEL PSELLUS lived midway the first transgressor! O feet, once in the eleventh century, and appears to have been a man of much aspiration toward the higher places of the earth. Where is Thy chorus of sick A senator of no ordinary influence, ones?—those whom Thou didst preceptor of the Emperor Michael cure of their diseases, and bring back previous to that accession, he is from the dead? Is none here, but supposed to have included in his only Nicodemus, to draw the nails instructions the advantages of sovefrom those hands and feet ?-none reignty, and in his precepts the most subtle means of securing them. We were about to add, that his acquirements as a scholar were scarcely less imperial than those of his pupil as a prince; but the expression might have been inappropriate. There are cases not infrequent, not entirely opposite to the present case, and worthy always of all meditation by such intelligent men as affect extensive acquisition, -when acquirements are not ruled Thy grave? I, who washed Thee by the man, but rule him. Whatever originates from the mind cannot obstruct her individual faculty; nay, whatever she receives inwardly and marks her power over by creating out of it a tertium quid,

according to the law of the perpetual generation of spiritual verities, is not obstructive but impulsive to the evolution of faculty; but the erudition, whether it be erudition as the world showed it formerly, or miscellaneous literature, as the world shows it now, the accumulated acquirement of whatever character. which remains extraneous to the mind, is and must be in the same degree an obstruction and deformity. How many are there from Psellus to Bayle, bound hand and foot intellectually with the rolls of their own papyrus-men whose erudition has grown stronger than their souls! How many whom we would gladly see washed in the clean waters of a little ignorance, and take our own part in their refreshment! Not that knowledge is bad, but that wisdom is better; and that it is better and wiser in the sight of the angels of knowledge to think out one true thought with a thrush's song and a green light for all lexicon (or to think it without the light and without the song—because truth is beautiful. where they are not seen or heard)than to mummy our benumbed souls with the circumvolutions of twenty thousand books. And so Michael Psellus was a learned man.

We have sought earnestly, yet in vain,—and the fact may account for our ill-humour,—a sight of certain iambics upon vices and virtues, and Tantalus and Sphinx, which are attributed to this writer, and cannot be in the moon after all:—earnestly, yet with no fairer encouragement to our desire than what befalls it from his poems "On the Councils," the first of which, and only the first, through the softness of our charities, we bring to confront the reader:—Know the holy councils, King, to their

utmost number, Such as roused the impious ones from their world-wide slumber!

Seven in all those councils were: Nice the first containing, When the godly master-soul Constantine

was reigning, What time at Byzantium, hallowed with the hyssop,

In heart and word, Metrophanes presided as archbishop!

It cut away Arius' tongue's maniacal delusion,

Which cut off from the Trinity the blessed Homoousion—

Blasphemed (O miserable man!) the maker of the creature,

And low beneath the Father cast the equal Filial nature.

The prose acrostic, contained in an office written by Psellus to the honour of Simeon, is elaborated on the words "I sing thee who didst write the metaphrases;" every sentence being insulated, and beginning with a charmed letter.

Say in a dance how we shall go, Who never could a measure know?

why, thus—(and yet Psellus, who did *know* everything, wrote a synopsis of the metres!)—why, thus:—

"Inspire me, Word of God, with a rhythmetic chant, for I am borne onward to praise Simeon Metaphrastes and Logothetes, as he is fitly called, the man worthy of admiration!

"Solemnly from the heavenly heights did the Blessed Ghost descend on thee, wise one, and finding thine heart pure, rested there, there verily in the body!"

Surely we need not write any more. But Michael Psellus was a very learned man.

JOHN of EUCHAITA (or Euchania, or Theodoropolis,—the three names do appear through the twilight to belong to one city) was a bishop, probably contemporary with Psellus —is only a poet now: we turn to see the voice which speaks to us. It is a voice with a soul in it, clear and sweet and living: and we who have walked long in the desert, leap up to its sound as to the dim flowing of a stream, and would take a deep breath by its side both for the weariness which is gone and the repose which is coming. But it is a rarer thing than a stream in the desert: it is a voice in the desert—the only voice of a city. The city may have three names, as we have said, or the three names may more fitly appertain to three cities--scholars knit their brows and wax doubtful as they talk · but a city denuded of its multitudes it surely is. ruined even of its ruins it surely is: no exhalation arises from its tombs. the foxes have lost their way to it. the bittern's cry is as dumb as the vanished population—only the Voice remains. John Mauropus, of Euchaita, Euchania, Theodoropolisone living man among many dead. as the Arabian tale goes of the city of enchantment—one speechful voice among the silent, sole survivor of the breath which maketh words. effluence of the soul replacing the bittern's cry-speak to us! And thou shalt be to us as a poet: we will salute thee by that high name. For have we not stood face to face with Michael Psellus and him of the metaphrases? Surely as a poet may we salute thee !

His poetry has, as if in contrast to the scenery of circumstances in which we find it, or to the fatality of circumstances in which it has not been found (and even Mr. Clarke in his learned work upon Sacred Literature. which is, however, incommunicative generally upon sacred poetry, appears unconscious of his being and his bishopric)—his poetry has a character singularly vital, fresh, and serene. There is nothing in it of the rapture of inspiration, little of the operativeness of art-nothing of imagination in a high sense, or of ear-service in any: he is not, he says, of those-Who rain hard with redundancies of

words. And thunder and lighten out of eloquence. His Greek being opposed to that of the Silentiarii and the Pisidæ by a peculiar simplicity and ease of collocation which the reader feels lightly in a moment, the thoughts move through its transparency with a certain calm nobleness and sweet living earnestness, with holy upturned eyes and human tears beneath the lids. till the reader feels lovingly too. startle him from his reverie with an octave note on a favourite literary fashion of the living London, drawn from the voice of the lost city; discovering by that sound the first serial

illustrator of pictures by poems, in the person of our Johannes. Here is a specimen from an annual of Euchaita, or Euchania, or Theodoropolis—we may say "annual" although the pictures were certainly not in a book, but were probably ornaments of the beautiful temple in the midst of the city, concerning which there is a tradition. Here is a specimen selected for love's sake, because it "illustrates" a portrait of Gregory Nazianzen:

What meditates thy thoughtful gaze, my father?

To tell me some new truth? Thou canst not so!

For all that mortal hands are weak to

gather
Thy blessed books unfolded long ago.

These are striking verses, upon the Blessed among women, weeping:—

O Lady of the passion, dost thou weep? What help can we then through our tears survey,

If such as thou a cause for wailing keep? What help, what hope, for us, sweet Lady, say?

"Good man, it doth befit thine heart to lay

More courage next it, having seen me so. All other hearts find other balm to-day— The whole world's consolation is my woe!"

Would any hear what can be said of a Transfiguration before Raffael's:—

Tremble, spectator, at the vision won thee!

Stand afar off, look downward from the height,
Lest Christ too nearly seen should lighten

on thee,
And from thy fleshly eveballs strike

the sight,
As Paul fell ruined by that glory white!
Lo, the disciples prostrate, each apart,
Each impotent to bear the lamping

light!
And all that Moses and Elias might,
The darkness caught the grace upon her

heart
And gave them strength for! Thou, if
evermore

A God-voice pierce thy dark,—rejoice, adore!

Our poet was as unwilling a bishop as the most sturdy of the "nolentes"; and there are poems written both in

depreciation of, and in retrospective regret for, the ordaining dignity, marked by noble and holy beauties which we are unwilling to pass without extraction. Still we are constrained for space, and must come at last to his chief individual characteristic-to the gentle humanities which, strange to say, preponderate in the solitary voice—to the familiar smiles and sighs which go up and down in it to our ear. We will take the poem "To his old house," and see how the house survives by his good help, when the sun shines no more on the golden statue of Constantine :-

O be not angry with me, gentle house. That I have left thee empty and deserted!

Since thou thyself that evil didst arouse, In being to thy masters so falsehearted,

In loving none of those who did possess thee,

In minist'ring to no one to an end, In no one's service caring to confess thee, But loving still the change of friend for friend,

And sending the last, plague-wise, to

the door! And so, or ere thou canst betray and

leave me,
I, a wise lord, dismiss thee, servitor,
And antedate the wrong thou mayst
achieve me

Against my will, by what my will allows; Yet not without some sorrow, gentle house!

For oh, beloved house, what time I render

My_last look back on thee I grow more tender!

Pleasant possession, hearth for father's age.

age, Dear gift of buried hands, sole heritage! My blood is stirred; and love, that learnt

its play
From all sweet customs, moves mine

heart thy way!
For thou wast all my nurse and helpful creature,

For thou wast all my tutor and my teacher;
In thee through lengthening toils I

struggled deep, In thee I watched all night without its sleep,

In thee I worked the wearier daytime out,

Exalting truth, or trying by a doubt.

And oh, my father's roof! the memory leaves

Such pangs as break mine heart, beloved eaves;

But God's word conquers all! . .

He is forced to a strange land, reverting with this benediction to the "dearest house":—

Farewell, farewell, mine own familiar one, Estranged for evermore from this day's sun.

Fare-thee-well so! Farewell, O second mother,

O nurse and help,—remains there not another!

My bringer-up to some sublimer measure Of holy childhood and perfected pleasure! Now other spirits must thou tend and teach

And minister thy quiet unto each, For reasoning uses, if they love such use, But nevermore to me! God keep thee,

God keep thee, faithful corner, where I drew

So calm a breath of life! And God keep

Kind neighbours! Though I leave you by His grace,

Let no grief bring a shadow to your face; Because whate'er He willeth to be done His will makes easy, makes the distant—

And soon brings all embraced before His throne!

We pass Philip Solitarius, who lived at the close of this eleventh century, even as we have passed one or two besides of his fellow-poets: because they, having hidden themselves beyond the reach of our eyes and the endeavour of our hands, and we being careful to speak by knowledge rather than by testimony, nothing remains to us but this same silent passing-this regretful one, as our care to do better must testify—albeit our fancy will not, by any means, account them, with all their advantages of absence," the best part of the solemnity."

Early in the twelfth century we are called to the recognition of Theo-DORE PRODROMUS, theologian, philosopher, and poet. His poems are unequal, consisting principally of a series of tetrastichs (Greek epigrams for lack of point, French epigrams for lack of poetry) upon the Old and New Testaments, and the Life of Chrysostom,-all nearly as bare of the rags of literary merit as might be expected from the design; and three didactic poems upon Love, Providence, and against Bareus the heretic, into which the poet has cast the recollected life of his soul. The soul deports herself as a soul should, with a vivacity and energy which work outward and upward into eloquence. The sentiments are lofty, the expression free; there is an instinct to a middle and an end. Music we miss. even to the elementary melody: the poet thinks his thoughts, and speaks them; not indeed what all poets, so called, do esteem a necessary effort, and indeed what we should thank him for doing; but he sings them in nowise, and they are not of that divine order which are crowned by right of their divinity with an inseparable aureole of sweet sound. His poem upon Love,—φιλία says the Greek word, but friendship does not answer to it,—is a dialogue between the personification and a stranger. It opens thus dramatically, the stranger speaking :-

Love! Lady diademed with honour, whence

And whither goest thou? Thy look presents

Tears to the lid, thy mien is vext and low, Thy locks fall wildly from thy drooping

Thy blushes are all pale, thy garb is fit For mourning in, and shoon and zone are

So changed thou art to sadness every

And all that pomp and purple thou didst

That seemly sweet, that new rose on the mouth. Thou fair-smoothed tresses, and that

graceful zone, Bright sandals, and the rest thou haddest

Are all departed, gone to nought together!

And now thou walkest mournful in the

Of mourning women'!-where and whence, again?

Love. From earth to God my Father. Dost thou say Stranger. That earth of Love is desolated? Yea!

It so much scorned me. Scorned? Stranger. And cast me out Love.From its door.

Stranger. From its door? As if without Love.

I had my lot to die!

Love consents to give her confidence to the wondering stranger; whereupon, as they sit in the shadow of a tall pine, she tells a Platonic story of all the good she had done in heaven before the stars, and the angels, and the throned Triad, and of all her subsequent sufferings on the melancholy and ungrateful earth. The poem, which includes much beauty, ends with a quaint sweetness in the troth-plighting of the stranger and the lady. Mayst thou have been faithful to that oath, O Theodore Prodromus! but thou didst swear "too much to be believed -so much."

The poems "On Providence" and "Against Bareus" exceed the "Love," perhaps, in power and eloquence to the full measure of the degree in which they fall short of the interest of the latter's design. Whereupon we dedicate the following selection from the "Providence" to Mr. Carlyle's "gigmen" and all "respectable persons ":-

Ah me! what tears mine eyes are welling forth,

To witness in this synagogue of earth Wise men speak wisely while the scoffers sing,

And rich men folly, for much honouring! Melitus stifles—Socrates decrees Our further knowledge! Death to So-

crates, And long life to Melitus! . .

Chiefdom of evil, gold! blind child of

Gnawing with fixed tooth earth's heart away!

Go! perish from us! objurgation vain To soulless nature, powerless to contain One ill unthrust upon it! Rather perish That turpitude of crowds, hy which they cherish

Bad men for their good fortune, or condemn,

Because of evil fortune, virtuous men!

Oh, for a trumpet-mouth! an iron tongue Sufficient for all speech! foundations hung

High on Parnassus' top to bear my feet! So from that watch-tower, words which shall be meet.

I may out-thunder to the nations near

me—
"Ye worshippers of gold, poor rich
men, hear me!

Where do ye wander?—for what object stand?

That gold is earth's ye carry in your hand,

And floweth earthward! bad men have its curse

The most profusely! would yourselves be worse

So to be richer?—better in your purse? Your royal purple—'twas a dog that found it!

Your pearl of price—a sickened oyster owned it!

Your glittering gems are pebbles, dustastray;

Your palace pomp was wrought of wood and clay,

Smoothed rock and moulded plinth! earth's clay, earth's wood,

Earth's common-hearted stones! Is this your mood,
To honour earth, to worship earth, nor

blush?"
What dost thou murmur savage mouth

What dost thou murmur, savage mouth?
Hush, hush,

Thy wrath is vainly breathed. The depth to tread

Of God's deep judgments, was not Paul's, he said.

The "savage mouth" speaks in

power, with whatever harshness: and we are tempted to contrast with this vehement utterance another short poem by the same poet, a little quaint withal, but light, soft, almost tuneful,—as written for a "Book of Beauty," and that not of Euchaita! The subject is "LIFE."

Oh, take me, thou mortal,—thy Life for thy praiser!

Thou hast met, found and seized me, and know'st what my ways are.

Nor leave me for slackness, nor yeld me for pleasure,

Nor look up too saintly, nor muse beyond measure!

B.P.

There's the veil from my head—see the worst of my mourning!

There are wheels to my feet—have a dread of their turning!

There are wings round my waist—I may flatter and flee thee!

There are yokes on my hands—fear the chains I decree thee!

Hold me! hold a shadow, the winds as they quiver;

Hold me! hold a dream, smoke, a track on the river.

Oh, take me, thou mortal,—thy Life for thy praiser,

Thou hast met not and seized not, nor know'st what my ways are!

Nay, frown not, and shrink not, nor call me an aspen;

There's the veil from my head! I have dropped from thy clasping! A fall-back within it I soon may afford

A fall-back within it I soon may afford thee;

There are wheels to my feet—I may roll back toward thee!

There are wings round my waist—I may flee back and clip thee!

There are vokes on row bands—I may

There are yokes on my hands—I may soon cease to whip thee!

Take courage! I rather would hearten

ake courage! I rather would hearten than hip thee!

JOHN TZETZA divides the twelfth century with his name, which is not a great one. In addition to an iambic fragment upon education, he has written indefatigably in the metre politicus, what must be read, if read at all, with a corresponding energy, -thirteen "chiliads," of "variæ historiæ," so called after Ælian's.-Ælian's without the" honey-tongue," -very various histories indeed, about crocodiles and flies, and Plato's philosophy and Cleopatra's nails, and Samson and Phidias, and the resurrection from the dead, and the Calydonian boar,—" everything under the sun" being, in fact, their imperfect epitome. The omission is simply POETRY! there is no apparent consciousness of her entity in the mind of this versifier; no aspiration towards her presence, not so much as a sigh upon her absence. We do not, indeed. become aware, in the whole course of this laborious work, of much unfolding of faculty—take it lower than the poetical; of nothing much beyond an occasional dry, sly, somewhat boorish humour, which being

good humour besides, would not be a bad thing were its traces only more extended. But the general level of the work is a dull talkativeness, a prosy adversity, who is no "Daughter of Jove," and a slumberousness without a dream. We adjudge to our reader the instructive history of the Phœnix.

A phomix is a single bird and synchronous with nature;

The peacock cannot equal him in beauty or in stature!

In radiance he outshines the gold; the world in wonder yieldeth;

world in wonder yieldeth; His nest he fixeth in the trees, and all of

spices buildeth.

And when he dies, a little worm, from out his body twining,

Doth generate him back again whene'er the sun is shining.

He lives in Egypt, and he dies in Ethiopia only, as

Asserts Philostratus, who wrote the Life of Apollonius.

And (as the wise Egyptian scribe, the holy scribe Chæremon,

Hath entered on these Institutes, all centre their esteem on)
Seven thousand years and six of age,

this phoenix of the story

Expireth from the fair Nile side, whereby

Expireth from the fair Nile side, whereby he had his glory!

In the early part of the fourteenth century, MANUEL PHILE, pricked emulously to the heart by the successful labours of Tzetza, embraced into identity with himself the remaining half of Ælian, and developed in his poetical treatise "On the Properties of Animals," to which Isachimus Camerarius provided a conclusion—the " Natural History " of that industrious and amusing Greek-Roman. The Natural History is translated into verse, but by no means glorified; and yet the poet of animals, Phile, has carried away far more of the Ælian honey clinging to the edges of his patera than the poet of the Chiliads did ever wot of. What we find in him is not beauty, what we hear in him is not music, but there is an open feeling for the beautiful which stirs at a word, and we have a scarcely confessed contentment in hearkening to those twice-told stories of birds and beasts and fishes, mea-

sured out to us in the low monotony of his chanting voice. Our selections shall say nothing of the live grasshopper, called, with the first breath of this paper, an emblem of the vital Greek tongue; because the space left to us closes within our sight, and the science of the age does not thirst to receive, through our hands, the history of grasshoppers, according to Ælian or Phile either. Everybody knows what Phile tells us here. that grasshoppers live upon morning dew, and cannot sing when it is dry. Everybody knows that the lady grasshopper sings not at all. And if the moral, drawn by Phile from this latter fact, of the advantage of silence in the female sex generally, be true and important, it is also too obvious to exact our enforcement of it. Therefore we pass by the grasshopper. and the nightingale too, for all her fantastic song; an hasten to introduce to European naturalists a Philhellenic species of heron, which has escaped the researches of Cuvier, and the peculiarities of which may account to the philosophic reader for that instinct of the "wisdom of our forefathers," which established an English university in approximation with the Fens. It is earnestly to be hoped that the nice ear in question for the Attic dialect may still be preserved among the herons of Cambridgeshire:-

A Grecian island nourisheth to bless A race of herons in all nobleness.

If some barbarian bark approach the shore,
They hate, they flee,—no eagle can out-

soar!
But if by chance an Attic voice be wist,
They grow softhearted straight, philhellenist;

Press on in earnest flocks along the strand,

And stretch their wings out to the comer's hand.

Perhaps he nears them with a gentle mind,—

They love his love, though foreign to their kind!

For so the island giveth wingèd teachers, In true love lessons, to all wingless creatures.

He has written, besides, "A

Dialogue between Mind and Phile," and other poems; and we cannot part without taking from him a more solemn tone, which may sound as an "Amen" to the good we have said of him. The following address to the Holy Spirit is concentrated in expression:—

O living Spirit, O falling of God-dew, O Grace which dost console us and renew, O vital light, O breath of angelhood, O generous ministration of things good, Creator of the visible, and best Upholder of the great unmanifest Power infinitely wise, new boon sublime Of science and of art, constraining might, In whom I breathe, live, speak, rejoice, and write,—

Be with us in all places, for all time!

"And now," saith the patientest reader of all, "you have done. Now we have watched out the whole night of the world with you, by no better light than these poetical rushlights. and the wicks fail, and the clock of the universal hour is near upon the stroke of the seventeenth century, and you have surely done!" Surely not, we answer; for we see a hand which the reader sees not, which beckons us over to Crete, and clasps within its shadowy fingers a roll of hymns Anacreontical, written by MAXIMUS MARGUNIUS: and not for the last of our readers would we lose this last of the Greeks, owing him salutation. Yet the hymns have, for the true Anacreontic fragrance, a musty odour, and we have scant praise for them in our nostrils. Their inspiration is from Gregory Nazianzen, whose "Soul and Body" are renewed in them by a double species of transmigration; and although we kiss the feet of Gregory's high excellences, we cannot admit any one of them to be a safe conductor of poetical inspiration. And, in union with Margunius's plagiaristic tendencies, there is a wearisome lengthiness, harder to bear. He will knit you to the whole length of a "Honi soit qui mal y pense," till you fall asleep to the humming of the stitches what time you should be reading

dropped into a "distraction," as the French say, -for nothing could be more different from what the English say, than our serene state of selfabnegation,-at the beginning of a house-building by this Maximus Margunius: when, reading on some hundred lines with our bare bodily eyes, and our soul starting up on a sudden to demand a measure of the progress, behold, he was building it still, with a trowel in the same hand: it was not forwarder by a brick. The swallows had time to hatch two nestfuls in a chimney while he finished the chimney-pot! Nevertheless he has moments of earnestness, and they leave beauties in their trace. Let us listen to this extract from his fifth hymn:-

Take me as a hermit lone With a desert life and moan; Only Thou anear to mete Slow or quick my pulse's beat; Only Thou, the night to chase With the sunlight in Thy face! Pleasure to the eyes may come From a glory seen afar, But if life concentre gloom Scattered by no little star, Then, how feeble, God, we are! Nav. whatever bird there be, (Ether by his flying stirred.) He, in this thing, must be free-And I, Saviour, am Thy bird, Pricking with an open beak At the words that Thou dost speak, Leave a breath upon my wings, That above these nether things I may rise to where Thou art, I may flutter next Thine heart! For if a light within me burn, It must be darkness in an urn, Unless, within its crystalline. That unbeginning light of Thine Shine!—oh, Saviour, let it shine!

we kiss the feet of Gregory's high excellences, we cannot admit any one of them to be a safe conductor of poetical inspiration. And, in union with Margunius's plagiaristic tendencies, there is a wearisome lengthiness, harder to bear. He will knit you to the whole length of a "Honi soit qui mal y pense," till you fall asleep to the humming of the stitches what time you should be reading the "moral." We ourselves once

brand; sometimes only a small trembling flame; sometimes only a white glimmer as of ashes breathed on by the wind; faint beacons and far! How far! We have watched them along the cloudy tops of the great centuries, through the ages dark but for them,—and now stand looking with eyes of farewell upon the last pale sign on the last mistbound hill. But it is the sixteenth hill a red light is gathering; above crown.

the falling of the dews a great sun is rising: there is a rushing of life and song upward-let it still be UPWARD! Shakespeare is in the world! And the Genius of English Poetry, she who only of all the earth is worthy (Goethe's spirit may hear us say so. and smile), stooping, with a royal gesture, to kiss the dead lips of the Genius of Greece, stands up her successor in the universe, by virtue of century. Beyond the ashes of the that chrism, and in right of her own

THE BOOK OF THE POETS

THE voice of the turtle is heard in the land. The green book of the earth is open, and the four winds are turning the leaves: while Nature, chief secretary to the creative Word, sits busy at her inditing of many a lovely poem,-her "Flower and the Leaf" on this side, her "Cuckoo and the Nightingale" on that, her "Paradise of Dainty Devices" in and out among the valleys, her "Polyolbion" away across the hills, her "Britannia's Pastorals" on the home meadows, her sonnets of tufted primroses, her lyrical outgushings of May blossoming, her epical and didactic solemnities of light and shadow, and many an illustrative picture to garnish the universal annual. What book shall we open side by side with Nature's? First, the book of God. "The Book of the Poets" may well come next—even this book, if it deserve indeed the nobility of its name.

But this book, which is not Campbell's "Selection from the British Poets," nor Southey's, nor different from either by being better, resembles many others of the nobly named, whether princes or hereditary legislators, in bearing a name too noble for its deserts. This book, consisting of short extracts from the books of the poets, beginning with Chaucer, ending with Beattie, and

and leave it thankful. The extracts from Chaucer are topsy-turvy-one from the "Canterbury Tales" prologue thrown in between two from the Knight's Tale: while Gower may blame "his fortune"-

> (And some men hold opinion That it is constellation.)

for the dry specimen crumbled off from his manmountainism. Of Lydgate there is scarcely a page; of Occleve, Hawes, and Skelton-the two last especially interesting in poetical history,—of Sackville, and the whole generation of dramatists, not a word. "The table is not full." and the ringing on it of Phillips's "Splendid Shilling" will not bribe us to endurance. What! place for Pomfret's platitudes, and no place for Shakespeare's divine sonnets? and no place for Jonson's and Fletcher's lyrics? Do lyrics and sonnets perish out of place whenever their poets make tragedies too, quenched by the entity of tragedy? We suggest that Shakespeare has nearly as much claim to place in any possible book of the poets (though also a book of the poetasters) as ever can have John Hughes, who "as a poet, is chiefly known," saith the critical editor, "by his tragedy of the 'Siege of Damascus." Let this book theremissing sundry by the way,—we call fore accept our boon, and remain a it indefinitely "A book of the poets," book of the poets, thankfully if not gloriously,-while we, on our own side, may be thankful too, that in the present days of the millennium of Jeremy Bentham—a more literally golden age than the laureates of Saturnus dreamed withal,—any memory of the poets should linger with the booksellers, and "come up this way" with the spring. The thing is good, in that it is at all. Send a little child into a garden, and he will be sure to bring you a nosegay worth having, though the red weed in it should "side the lily," and sundry of the prettiest flowers be held stalk upwards. Flowers are flowers and poets are poets, and "A book of the poets" must be right welcome at every hour of the clock.

For the preliminary essay, which is very moderately well done, we embrace it, with our fingers at least, in taking up the volume. It pleases us better on the solitary point of the devotional poets than Mr. Campbell's beautiful treatise, doing, as it seems to us, more frank justice to the Witherses, the Quarleses, and the Crashaws. Otherwise the criticism and philosophy to be found in it are scarcely of the happiest,—although even the first astonishing paragraph which justifies the utility of poetry on the ground of its being an attractive variety of language, a persuasive medium for abstract ideas (as reasonable were the justification of a scraph's essence deduced from the cloud beneath his foot!)—shall not provoke us back to discontent from the vision of the poets of England, suggested by the title of this "Book," and stretching along gloriously to our survey.

Our poetry has an heroic genealogy. It arose, where the sun rises, in the far East. It came out from Arabia, and was tilted on the lance-heads of the Saracens into the heart of Europe, Armorica catching it in rebound from Spain, and England from Armorica. It issued in its first breath from Georgia, wrapt in the gathering-cry of Persian Odin: and passing from the orient of the sun tions, our pride of place and name. to the antagonistic snows of Iceland,

of Germany and the jutting shores of Scandinavia, and embodying in itself all wayside sounds, even to the rude shouts of the brazen-throated Cimbri, -so modified, multiplied, resonant in a thousand Runic echoes, it rushed abroad like a blast into Britain. Britain, the Arabic Saracenic Armorican, and the Georgian Gothic Scandinavian mixed sound at last; and the dying suspirations of the Grecian and Latin literatures, the last low stir of the "Gesta Romanorum," with the apocryphal personations of lost authentic voices, breathed up together through the fissures of the rent universe, to help the new intonation and accomplish the cadence. Genius was thrust onward to a new slope of the world. And soon, when simpler minstrels had sat there long enough to tune the ear of the time,-when Layamon and his successors had hummed long enough. like wild bees, upon the lips of our infant poetry predestined to eloquence,—then Robert [sic, but ? William] Langland, the monk, walking for cloister "by a wode's syde," on the Malvern Hills, took counsel with his holy "Plowman," and sang of other visions than their highest ridge can show. While we write, the woods upon those beautiful hills are obsolete, even as Langland's verses; scarcely a shrub grows upon the hills! but it is well for the thinkers of England to remember reverently, while, taking thought of her poetry, they stand among the gorse,-that if we may boast now of more honoured localities, of Shakespeare's "rocky Avon," and Spenser's "soft-streaming Thames," and Wordsworth's "Rydal Mere, still our first holy poet-ground is there.

But it is in Chaucer we touch the true height, and look abroad into the kingdoms and glories of our poetical literature,-it is with Chaucer that we begin our " Books of the Poets," our collections and selec-And the genius of the poet shares the and oversweeping the black pines character of his position: he was glory better. The "cheerful morning face," "the breezy call of incensebreathing morn," you recognise in his countenance and voice: it is a voice full of promise and prophecy. He is the good omen of our poetry, to his own creed of good luck, heard before the cuckoo.

Up rose the sunne, and uprose Emilie, of kings, conscious of futurity in his smile. He is a king and inherits the smilingly to embrace his great heritage. Nothing is too high for him low to dower with an affection. and death, he cries upon God,—as a sympathetic creature he singles out half a summer's day and bless it for fellowship. His senses are open and sensibilities capacious of superthinker's. Child-like, too, his tears and smiles lie at the edge of his eyes. and he is one proof more among the many, that the deepest pathos and the quickest gaieties hide together in the same nature. He is too wakelove are built and holden in the winkclose by the actual ones, your stop- is our ineffaceable impression, in fact,

made for an early poet, and the meta- watch shall reckon no difference in phors of dawn and spring doubly the beating of their hearts. He knew become him. A morning-star, a the secret of nature and art,-that lark's exaltation, cannot usher in a truth is beauty,-and saying "I will make 'A Wife of Bath' as well as Emilie, and you shall remember her as long," we do remember her as long. And he sent us a train of pilgrims, each with a distinct individuality apart from the pilgrimage, the "good bird," according to the all the way from Southwark and the Romans, "the best good angel of the Tabard Inn, to Canterbury and spring," the nightingale, according Becket's shrine: and their laughter comes never to an end, and their talk goes on with the stars, and all the railroads which may intersect the spoilt earth for ever, cannot hush and uprose her poet, the first of a line the "tramp, tramp" of their horses'

Controversy is provocative. We earth, and expands his great soul cannot help observing, because certain critics observe otherwise, that Chaucer utters as true music as ever came to touch with a thought, nothing too from poet of musician; that some of the sweetest cadences in all our Enga complete creature cognate of life lish are extant in his-" swete upon his tongue "in completest modulation. Let "Denham's strength and a daisy from the universe ("si douce Waller's sweetness join" the Io est la marguerite"), to lie down by pean of a later age, the "eurekamen" of Pope and his generation. Not one of the "Queen Anne's men," measurdelicate, like a young child's—his ing out tuneful breath upon their fingers, like ribbons for topknots, did sensual relations, like an experienced know the art of versification as the old rude Chaucer knew it. Call him rude for the picturesqueness of the epithet; but his verse has, at least, as much regularity in the sense of true art, and more manifestly in proportion to our increasing acquaint. ful and curious to lose the stirring ance with his dialect and pronunciaof a leaf, yet not too wide awake to tion, as can be discovered or dreamed see visions of green and white ladies in the French school. Critics indeed between the branches; and a fair have set up a system based upon the house of fame and a noble court of crushed atoms of first principles, maintaining that poor Chaucer wrote ing of his eyelash. And because his by accent only! Grant to them that imagination is neither too "high he counted no verses on his fingers; fantastical" to refuse proudly the grant that he never disciplined his ravitation of the earth, not too highest thoughts to walk up and light of love" to lose it carelessly, down in a paddock—ten paces and a he can create as well as dream, and turn; grant that his singing is not work with clay as well as cloud; after the likeness of their sing-song: and when his men and women stand but there end your admissions. It

that the whole theory of accent and quantity held in relation to ancient and modern poetry stands upon a fallacy; totters rather than stands; and that when considered in connection with such old moderns as our Chaucer, the fallaciousness is especially apparent. Chaucer wrote by quantity, just as Homer did before him, just as Goethe did after him, just as all poets must. Rules differ, principles are identical. All rhythm presupposes quantity. Organ-pipe, or harp, the musician plays by time. Greek or English, Chaucer or Pope, the poet sings by time. What is this accent but a stroke, an emphasis, with a successive pause to make complete the time? And what is the difference between this accent and quantity but the difference between a harp-note and an organ-note? otherwise, quantity expressed in different ways? It is as easy for matter to subsist out of space, as music out of time.

Side by side with Chaucer comes Gower, who is ungratefully disregarded too often, because side by side with Chaucer. He who rides in the king's chariot will miss the people's "hic est." Could Gower be considered apart, there might be found signs in him of an independent royalty, however his fate may seem to lie in waiting for ever in his brother's antechamber, like Napoleon's tame kings. To speak our mind, he has been much undervalued. He is nailed to a comparative degree; and everybody seems to make it a condition of speaking of him, that something be called inferior within him, and something superior out of him. He is laid down flat, as a dark background for" throwing out" Chaucer's lights; he is used as a ποῦ στω for leaping up into the empyrean of Chaucer's praise. This is not just nor worthy. His principal poem, the "Confessio Amantis," preceded the "Canterbury Tales," and proves an abundant fancy, a full head and full heart, and neither ineloquent. We do not praise its design,—in which the father-confessor is set up

as a storyteller, like the Bishop of Tricca, "avec l'âme," like the Cardinal de Retz, "le moins ecclésiastique du monde,"-while we admit that he tells his stories as if born to the manner of it, and that they are not much the graver, nor, peradventure, the holier either, for the circumstance of the confessorship. They are indeed told gracefully and pleasantly enough, and if with no superfluous life and gesture, with an active sense of beauty in some sort, and as flowing a rhythm as may bear comparison with many octosyllabics of our day; Chaucer himself having done more honour to their worth as stories than we can do in our praise, by adopting and crowning several of their number for king's sons within his own palaces. And this recall; that, at the opening of one glorious felony, the "Man of Lawe's Tale," he has written, a little unlawfully and ungratefully considering the connection, some lines of harsh significance upon poor Gower,-whence has been conjectured by the grey gossips of criticism, a literary jealousy, an unholy enmity, nothing less than a soul-chasm between the contemporary poets. We believe nothing of it: no, nor of the Shakespeare and Jonson feud after it-

To alle such cursed stories we saie fy.

That Chaucer wrote in irritation is clear: that he was angry seriously and lastingly, or beyond the pastime of passion spent in a verse as provoked by a verse, there appears to us no reason for crediting. But our idea of the nature of the irritation will expound itself in our idea of the offence, which is here in Dan Gower's proper words, as extracted from the Ladie Venus's speech in the "Confessio Amantis."

And grete well Chaucer when ye mete, As my disciple and poëte!—

Forthy now in his daiës old, Thou shalt him tellë this message, That he upon his latter age, To sette an ende of alle his werke As he who is mine owne clerke, Do make his testament of love.

We would not slander Chaucer's temper, -we believe, on the contrary, that he had the sweetest temper in the world, -and still it is our conviction, none the weaker, that he was far from being entirely pleased by this "message." We are sure he did not like the message, and not many poets would. His "elvish countenance" might well grow dark, and "his sugred mouth" speak somewhat sourly, in response to such a message. Decidedly, in our own opinion, it was an impertinent message, a provocative message, a most inexcusable and odious message! Waxing hotter ourselves the longer we think of it, there is the more excuse for Chaucer. For, consider, gentle reader! this indecorous message preceded the appearance of the "Canterbury Tales," and proceeded from a rival poet in the act of completing his principal work,its plain significance being "I have done my poem, and you cannot do yours because you are superannuated." And this, while the great poet addressed was looking forward farther than the visible horizon, his eyes dilated with a mighty purpose. And to be counselled by this, to shut them for sooth, and take his crook and dog and place in the valleys like a grey shepherd of the Pyreneeshe, who felt his foot strong upon the heights! he, with no wrinkle on his forehead deep enough to touch the outermost of inward smooth dreams —he, in the divine youth of his healthy soul, in the quenchless love of his embracing sympathies, in the untired working of his perpetual energies,-to" make an ende of alle his werke" and be old, as if he were not a poet! "Go to, O vain man," —we do not reckon the age of the poet's soul by the shadow on the dial! Enough that it falls upon his grave.

Occleve and breathed the air of the world while it was otherwise: and unless we Chaucer breathed it, although sur- embrace in our desolation such poems viving him so long as rather to take as the rhyming chronicles of Harding standing as his successors than and Fabian, we must hearken for contemporaries. Both called him music to the clashing of "Bilboa

" master" with a faithful reverting tenderness, and, however we are bound to distinguish Lydgate as the higher poet of the two, Occleve's "Alas" may become the other's lips-

Alas, that thou thine excellent prudence In thy bed mortell mightest not bequeath!

For alas! it is not bequeathed. Lydgate's :"Thebaid," attached by its introduction to "the Canterbury Tales," gives or enforces the occasion for sighing comparisons with the master's picturesque vivacity, while equally in delicacy and intenseness we admit no progress in the disciple. He does, in fact, appear to us so much overrated by the critics, that we are tempted to extend to his poetry his own admission on his monkish dress,—

I wear a habit of perfection Although my life agree not with that

and to opine concerning the praise and poetry taken together, that the latter agrees not with that same. An elegant poet—" poeta elegans"—was he called by the courteous Pits,—a questionable compliment in most cases, while the application in the particular one agrees not with that same. An improver of the language he is granted to be by all; and a voluminous writer of respectable faculties, in his position, could scarcely help being so: he has flashes of genius, but they are not prolonged to the point of warming the soul, can strike a bold note, but fails to hold it on, attains to moments of power and pathos, but wears, for working days, no habit of perfection.

These are our thoughts of Lydgate; and yet when he ceased his singing, none sang better; there was silence in the land. In Scotland, indeed. poet-tongues were not all mute: the air across the Border "gave delight Lydgate both and hurt not." Here in the South blades," and be content that the wars epithet or the like of the epithet, -and of the Red and White Roses should that, less as the largess of the inculsilence the warbling of the nightingales. That figure dropped to our Yet Langland's "Piers Plowman," pen's point, and the reader may accept it as a figure—as no more. To illustrate by figures the times and the "Pastyme of Plesure," by Stephen the seasons of poetical manifestation and decay, is at once easier and more reasonable than to attempt to account for them by causes, light the great allegorical poem of the We do not believe that poets multiply in peace-time like sheep and sheaves, | There was a force of suggestion which nor that they fly, like partridges, at | the first beating of the drum; and we do believe, having a previous for a pastime, being a course of faith in the pneumatic character of their gift, that the period of its the trivium and quadrivium of the bestowment is not subject to the calculations of our philosophy. Let, therefore, the long silence from Chau-Belle Pucelle, marries her according cer and his disciples down to the to the lex ecclesiae, is happy " all the sixteenth century, be left standing as a fact undisturbed by any good reasons for its existence, or by any other company than some harmless metaphor-harmless and ineffectual as a glow-worm's glitter at the foot of a colossal statue of Harpocrates. Call it, if you please, as Warton does, " a nipping frost succeeding a premature spring; " or call it, because we would not think our Chaucer premature, or the silence cruel-the trance of English Poetry: her breath, once emitted creatively, indrawn and retained,—herself sinking into deep sleep, like the mother of Apollonius before the glory of a vision, to awaken, to leap up (ἐξέθορες says Philostratus, the narrator) in a flowery meadow, at the clapping of the white wings of a chorus of encircling swans. We shall endeavour to realise this awaking.

Is Hawes a swan? a black (letter) swan? Certain voices will "say nay, say nay; " and already, and without our provocation, he seems to us unjustly depreciated. Warton was called "the indulgent historian of our poetry," for being so kind as to passages stand up erect, claiming the and sigh, and both for "pastyme."

gent than the debt of the just? and Chaucer's "House of Fame," and Lydgate's "Temple of Glasse," and Hawes, are the four columnar marbles, the four allegorical poems, on whose foundation is exalted into world, Spenser's "Faery Queen." preceded Sackville's, and Hawes uttered it. His work is very grave instruction upon the seven sciences, schools; whereby Grand Amour, scholar and hero, wooing and winning rest of his life" by the lex of all matrimonial romances,-and, leisure and in old age, dies by the lex naturæ. He tells his own story quite to an end, including the particulars of his funeral and epitaph; and is considerate enough to leave the reader in full assurance of his posthumous reputation. And now let those who smile at the design dismiss their levity before the poet's utterance:-

O mortall folke, you may beholde and see Howe I lye here, sometime a mighty knight.

The ende of joye and all prosperitie Is death at last thorough his course and might.

After the day there cometh the dark night,

For though the day appear ever so long, At last the bell ringeth to even song

—it" ringeth" in our ear with a soft and solemn music to which the soul is prodigal of echoes. We may answer for the poetic faculty of its " maker." He is, in fact, not merely ingenious and fanciful, but abounds -the word, with an allowance for the unhappiness of his subject, is scarcely discover "one fine line" in him! too strong, -with passages of thought-What name must the over kind have, ful sweetness and cheerful tenderness, in whose susceptible memories whole at which we are constrained to smile Was never payne but it had joye at laste In the favre morrow.

There is a lovely cadence! And then Amour's courtship of his "swete ladie "-a "cynosure" before Milton's !-conducted as simply, yet touchingly, as if he were innocent of the seven deadly sciences, and knew no more of "the Ladye Grammere" than might become a trouba-

O swete ladie, the true and perfect star Of my true heart! O take ye now pitie! Think on my payne which am tofore you here.-

With your swete eyes behold you me, and

How thought and woe by great extremitie Hath changed my colour into pale and

It was not so when I to love began.

The date assigned to this "Pastyme of Plesure" is 1506, some fifty years before the birth of Spenser. Whether it was written in vain for Spenser, judge ye. To the present generation it is covered deep with the dust of more than three centuries, and few tongues ask above the place, -" What lies here?"

Barclay is our next swan; and verily might be mistaken, in any sort taken, by naturalists, for a crow. He is our first writer of ecloques, the translator of the "Ship of Fools," and a thinker of his own thoughts

with sufficient intrepidity.

Skelton "floats double, swan and shadow," as poet laureate of the University of Oxford, and "royal orator "of Henry VII. He presents a strange specimen of a court-poet, and if, as Erasmus says, "Britannicarum literarum lumen" at the same time,—the light is a pitchy torchlight, wild and rough. Yet we do not despise Skelton: despise him? it were easier to hate. The man is very strong; he triumphs, foams, is rabid, in the sense of strength; he mesmerises our souls with the sense of strength-it is as easy to despise a wild beast in a forest, as John Skelton, poet laureate. He is as like a wild beast as a poet proposition, for his own verses. laureate can be. In his wonderful

dominion over language, he tears it, as with teeth and paws, ravenously, savagely: devastating rather than creating, dominant rather for liberty than for dignity. It is the very sansculottism of eloquence; oratory of a Silenus drunk with anger only. Mark him as the satyr of poets! fear him as the Juvenal of satyrs! and watch him with his rugged, rapid, picturesque savageness, his "breathless rhymes," to use the fit phrase of the satirist Hall, or-

> His rhymes all ragged, Tattered, and jagged,

to use his own,—climbing the high trees of Delphi, and pelting from thence his victim underneath, whether priest or cardinal, with roughrinded apples! And then ask, could he write otherwise than so? The answer is this opening to his poem of the "Bouge of Court," and the impression inevitable, of the serious sense of beauty and harmony to which it gives evidence.

In autumn when the sun in virgine By radiant heat enripened hath our corne, When Luna, full of mutabilitie, As empëress, the diadem hath worne Of our pole Arctic, smiling as in scorn At our folie and our unstedfastnesse-

but our last word of Skelton must be. that we do not doubt his influence for good upon our language. He was a writer singularly fitted for beating out the knots of the cordage, and straining the lengths to extension; a rough worker at rough work. Strong, rough Skelton! We can no more deride him than my good lord cardinal could. If our critical eyebrows must motion contempt at somebody of the period, we choose Tusser, and his "Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandry and Housewifery." Whatever we say of Tusser, no fear of harming a poet,—

> Make ready a bin For chaff to lie in.

and there may be room therein, in compliment to the author of the

Lord Surrey passes as the tuner

of our English nearly up to its present pitch of delicacy and smoothness; and we admit that he had a melody in his thoughts which they dared not disobey. That he is, as has been alleged by a chief critic, "our first metrical writer," lies not in our creed; and even Turberville's more measured praise,—

Our mother tongue by him hath got such lyght

That ruder speche thereby is banisht qwyht,—

we have difficulty in accepting. We venture to be of opinion that he did not belong to that order of masterminds with whom transitions originate, although qualified, by the quickness of a yielding grace, to assist effectually a transitional movement. There are names which catch the proverbs of praise as a hedge-thorn catches sheep's wool, by position and approximation rather than adaptitude: and this name is of them. Yet it is a high name. His poetry makes the ear lean to it, it is so sweet and low; the English he made it of being ready to be sweet, and falling ripe in sweetness into other hands than his. For the poems of his friend, Sir Thomas Wyatt, have more thought, freedom and variety, more general earnestness, more of the attributes of masterdom, than Lord Surrey's; while it were vain to reproach for lack of melody the writer of that loveliest lyric, "My lute, be still." And Wyatt is various in metres, and the first song-writer (that praise we must secure to him) of his generation. For the rest, there is an inequality in the structure of his verses which is very striking and observable in Surrey himself: as if the language, consciously insecure in her position, were balancing her accentual being and the forms of her pronunciation, half giddily, on the very turning point of transition. Take from Wyatt such a stanza as this, for instance,-

The long love that in my thoughts I tuned lute. He a harbour, And in my heart doth keep his residence, not painfully, and

Into my face presseth with bold pretence, And there campeth, displaying his banner,

and oppose to it the next example, polished as Pope,—

But I am here in Kent and Christendom, Among the Muses where I read and rhyme;

Where, if thou list, mine own John Poins, to come,

Thou shalt be judge how I do spend my time.

It is well to mark Wyatt as a leader in the art of didactic poetic composition under the epistolary form, "sternly milde" (as Surrey said of his countenance) in the leaning toward satire. It is very well to mark many of his songs as of exceeding beauty, and as preserving clear their touching simplicity from that plague of over-curious conceits which infest his writings generally. That was the plague of Italian literature transmitted by contagion, together with better things—together with the love of love-lore, and the sonnet structure, the summer-bower for one fair thought, delighted in and naturalised in England by Wyatt and Surrey. For the latter,-

From Tuscane came his ladye's worthy race:

and his Muse as well as Geraldine. Drops from Plato's cup, passing through Petrarch's, not merely perfumed and coloured but diluted by the medium, we find in Surrey's cup also. We must not underpraise Surrey to balance the overpraise we murmur at. Denying him supremacy as a reformer, the denial of his poetic nobleness is far from us. We attribute to him the chivalry of the light ages; we call him a scholastic troubadour. The longest and most beautiful of his poems ("describing the lover's whole state") was a memory in the mind of Milton when he wrote his "Allegro." He has that measure of pathos whose expression is no gesture of passion, but the skilful fingering on a welltuned lute. He affects us at worst With easie sighs such as folks draw in love,

He wrote the first English blank verse, in his translation of two books of the Æneid. He leads, in seeming, to the ear of the world, and by predestination of "popular breath," that little choral swan-chant which, swelled by Wyatt, Vaux, Bryan, and others, brake the common air in the days of the eighth Henry. And he fulfilled in sorrow his awarded fate as a poet, his sun going down at noon—and the cleft head, with its fair youthful curls, testifying like that fabled head of Orpheus to the music of the living tangue.

music of the living tongue. Sackville, Lord Dorset, takes up the new blank verse from the lips of Surrey, and turns it to its right use of tragedy. We cannot say that he does for it much more. His "Gorboduc." with some twenty years between it and Shakespeare, is farther from the true drama in versification and all the rest, than "Gammer Gurton" is from "Gorboduc." Sackville's blank verse, like Lord Surrey's before him, is only heroic verse without rhyme: and we must say so in relation to Gascoigne, who wrote the second blank verse tragedy, the " locasta." and the first blank verse original poem, "The Stele Glass." The secret of the blank verse of Shakespeare, and Fletcher, and Milton, did not dwell with them: the arched cadence, with its artistic keystone and underflood of broad continuous sound, was never achieved nor attempted by its first builders. We sometimes whisper in our silence that Marlowe's "brave sublunary" instincts should have groped that way. But no! Chaucer had more sense of music in the pause than Marlowe had. Marlowe's rhythm is not indeed, hard and stiff and uniform, like the sentences of "Gorboduc," as if the pattern-one had been cut in boxwood: there is a difference between uniformity and monotony, and he found it; his cadence re-

orbicular grandeur of unbroken and

It remains to us to speak of the work by which Sackville is better known than by "Gorboduc,"—the. "Mirror for Magistrates." The design of it has been strangely praised. seeing that whatever that peculiar merit were, Lydgate's "Fall of Princes" certainly cast the shadow before. But Sackville's commencement of the execution proved the master's hand; and that the great canvas fell abandoned to the blurring brushes of inadequate disciples, was an ill-fortune compensated adequately by the honour attributed to the Induction—of inducing a nobler genius than his own, even Spenser's, to a nobler labour. We cannot doubt the influence of that Induction. Its colossal figures, in high allegorical relief, were exactly adapted to impress the outspread fancy of the most sensitive of poets. A yew-tree cannot stand at noon in an open pleasaunce without throwing the outline of its branches on the broad and sunny grass. Still, admitting the suggestion in its fulness, nothing can differ more than the allegorical results of the several geniuses of Lord Dorset and Spenser. Tear-drop and dewdrop respond more similarly to analysis; or morbid grief and ideal joy. Sackville stands close wrapt in the "blanket of his dark," and will not drop his mantle for the sun. Spenser's business is with the lights of the world, and the lights beyond the world.

ted by its first builders. We sometimes whisper in our silence that Marlowe's "brave sublunary" instincts should have groped that way. But no! Chaucer had more sense of music in the pause than Marlowe had. Marlowe's rhythm is not, indeed, hard and stiff and uniform, like the sentences of "Gorboduc," as if the pattern-one had been cut in boxwood: there is a difference between uniformity and monotony, and he found it; his cadence revolves like a wheel, progressively if slowly and heavily, and with an

late and in its fashion, upon the immorality of mournful poems, upon the criminality of "melodious tears," upon the morbidness of the sorrows of poets,—because Lord Byron was morbidly sorrowful, and because a crowd of his ephemeral imitators the visible universe her occult hung their heads all on one side and were insincerely sorrowful. The fact, however, has been, apart from Lord Byron and his disciples, that the " at at" of Apollo's flower is vocally sad in the prevailing majority of dom so coarse and loud indeed, as to poetical compositions. The philosophy is, perhaps, that the poetic covert at Woodstock—or with homely temperament, half-way between the light of the ideal and the darkness of low in the grasses: the other adopts, the real, and rendered by each more sensitive to the other, and unable, without a struggle, to pass out clear and calm into either, bears the impress of the necessary conflict in dust and blood. The philosophy may be, that only the stronger spirits do accomplish this victory, having lordship over their own genius; whether they accomplish it by looking bravely to the good ends of evil things, which is the practical ideal. and possible to all men in a measure —or by abstracting the inward sense from sensual things and their influences, which is subjectivity perfected -or by glorifying sensual things with the inward sense, which is objectivity transfigured-or by attaining to the highest vision of the idealist, which is subjectivity turned outward into an actual objectivity.

To the last triumph Shakespeare attained; but Chaucer and Spenser fulfilled their destiny and grew to their mutual likeness as cheerful poets, by certain of the former pro-They two are alike in their cheerfulness, yet are their cheerfulnesses most unlike. Each poet laughs: yet their laughters ring with as far a difference as the sheep-bell on the hill and the joy-bell in the city. Each is earnest in his gladness: each active in persuading you of it. You are persuaded, and hold each for a cheerful man. The whole difference is, that Chaucer has a cheerful humanity: Spenser,

chcerful ideality. One rejoices walking on the sunny side of the street: the other walking out of the street in a way of his own, kept green by a blessed vision. One uses the adroitness of his fancy by distilling out of smiles: the other by fleeing beyond the possible frown, the occasions of natural ills, to that " cave of cloud " where he may smile safely to himself. One holds festival with men-selstartle the deer from their green Nature and her "douce marguerite" for his playfellows, imaginary or spiritual existences, and will not sav a word to Nature herself, unless it please her to dress for his masque and speak daintily sweet and rare The human heart of like a spirit. one utters oracles; the imagination of the other speaks for his heart, and we miss no prophecy. For music, we praised Chaucer's, and not only as Dryden did, for "a Scotch tune." But never issued there from lip or instrument, or the tuned causes of nature, more levely sound than we gather from our Spenser's art. His mouth is vowed away from the very possibilities of harshness. Right leans to wrong in its excess. rhythm is the continuity of melody, not harmony, because too smooth for modulation-because" by his vow" he dares not touch a discord for the sake of consummating a harmony. It is the singing of an angel in a dream: it has not enough of contrary for waking music. Of his great poem we may say that we miss no humanity in it, because we make a new humanity out of it and are satisfied in our human hearts -as new humanity vivified by the poet's life, moving in happy measure to the chanting of his thoughts, and upon ground supernaturally beautified by his sense of the beautiful. As an allegory, it enchants us away from its own purposes. Una is Una to us; and Sans Foy is a traitor, and a | Errour is " an ugly monster," with a

"tayle;" and we thank nobody in the world, not even Spenser, for trying to prove it otherwise. Do we dispraise an allegorical poem by throwing off its allegory? we trow not. Probably, certainly to our impression, the highest triumph of an allegory, from this of the "Faery Queen" down to the "Pilgrim's Progress," is the abnegation of itself.

Oh those days of Elizabeth! We call them the days of Elizabeth, but the glory fell over the ridge, in illumination of the half-century beyond: those days of Elizabeth! Full were they of poets as the summer days are of birds,—

No branch on which a fine bird did not sit,

No bird but his sweet song did shrilly sing,

No song but did contayne a lovely dit.

We hear of the dramatists, and shall speak of them presently; but the lyric singers were yet more numerous, —there were singers in every class. Never since the first nightingale brake voice in Eden arose such a jubilee-concert: never before nor since has such a crowd of true poets uttered true poetic speech in one Not in England evermore! Not in Greece, that we know. Not in Rome, by what we know. Talk of their Augustan era—we will not talk of it, lest we desecrate our own of Elizabeth. The latter was rightly prefigured by our figure of the chorus of swans. It was besides the Milky Way of poetry: it was the miracle age of poetical history. We may fancy that the master-souls of Shakespeare and Spenser, breathing, stirring in divine emotion, shot vibratory life through other souls in electric association: we may hear, in fancy, one wind moving every leaf in a forest-one voice responded to by a thousand rock-echoes. Why, a common man walking through the earth in those days grew a poet by position-even as a child's shadow cast upon a mountain slope is dilated to the aspect of a giant's.

If we, for our own parts, did enact a Briareus, we might count these poets on the fingers of our hundred hands, after the fashion of the poets of Queen Anne's time, counting their syllables. We do not talk of them as "faultless monsters," however wonderful in the multitude and verity of their gifts: their faults were numerous, too. Many poets of an excellent sweetness, thinking of poetry that, like love,

It was to be all made of fantasy,—

fell poetry-sick, as they might fall love-sick, and knotted associations, far and free enough to girdle the earth withal, into true love-knots of quaintest devices. Many poets affected novelty rather than truth; and many attained to novelty rather by attitude than altitude, whether of thought or word. Worst of all, many were incompetent to Sir Philip Sidney's ordeal—the translation of their verses into prose-and would have perished utterly by that hot ploughshare. Still, the natural healthy eye turns toward the light, and the true calling of criticism remains the distinguishing of beauty. Love and honour to the poets of Elizabeth—honour and love to them all! Honour even to the fellow-workers with Sackville in the "Mirror for Magistrates," to Ferrers, Churchyard and others, who had their hand upon the ore if they did not clasp it! and to Warner, the poet of Albion's England, singing snatches of balladpathos, while he worked, for the most . part heavily, too, with a bowed back as at a stiff soil—and to Gascoigne, reflecting beauty and light from his "Stele Glass," though his "Fruites of War" are scarcely fruits from Parnassus—and to Daniel, tender and noble, and teaching, in his "Musophilus," the chivalry of poets, though in his "Civil Wars" somewhat too historical, as Drayton has written of him-and to Drayton, generous in the "Polyolbion" of his poet-blessing on every hill and river through this fair England, and not ineloquent in his Heroical Epistles, though some-

what tame and level in his "Barons' Wars"—and to the two brothers Fletcher, Giles and Phineas, authors greatness of "Christ's Victory" and "The England. Purple Island," for whom the Muse's kiss followed close upon the mother's, gifting their lips with no vulgar music and their house with that noble kinsman, Fletcher the dramatist! Honour, too, to Davies, who "reasoned in verse" with a strong mind and strong enunciation, though he wrote one poem on the Soul and the resolution of his satiric humour. another on Dancing, and concentrated the diverging rays of intellect and folly in his sonnets on the reigning Astræa—and to Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke, who had deep thoughts enough to accomplish ten poets of these degenerate days, though because of some obscurity in their expression you would find some twenty critics "full of oaths" by the Pyramids, that they all meant nought—and to Chamberlayne, picturesque, imaginative, earnest (by no means dramatic) in his poetic romance of "Pharonnida," though accumulative to excess of figures, and pedantic in such verbal learning as "entheon charms," the "catagraph" of a picture, the "exagitations and congestions of elements," et sic omnia!-to Chalkhill. wrapt, even bound, "in soft Lydian airs," till himself, as well as his Clearchus and Thealma, fall asleep in involutions of harmony-and to Browne, something languid in his "Britannia's Pastorals," by sitting in the sun with Guarini and Marini, and "perplext in the extreme" by a thousand images and sounds of beauty calling him across the dewy fields—and to Wither, author of the "Shepherd's Hunting," and how much else? Wither, who wrote of poetry like a poet, and in return has been dishonoured and misprised by some of his own kind—a true sincere poet of blessed oracles. Honour, love and praise to him and all! May pardon come to us from the unnamed.

Honour also to the translators of poems—to such as Chapman and Sylvester—great hearts, interpreters

worthily thanked by the Miltons, and Popes, and Keatses, for their gift of greatness to the language of their

Honour to the satirists! to Marston, who struck boldly and coarsely at an offence from the same level with the offender-to Hall, preserving his own elevation, and flashing downwardly those thick lightnings in which we smell the sulphur-and to Donne, whose instinct to beauty overcame

Honour, again, to the singers of brief poems, to the lyrists and sonneteers! O Shakespeare, let thy name rest gently among them, perfuming the place. We "swear" that these sonnets and songs do verily breathe. "not of themselves, but thee;" and we recognise and bless them as short sighs from thy large poetic heart, burdened with diviner inspiration! O rare Ben Jonson, let us have thy songs, rounded each with a spherical thought, and the lyrics from thy masques alive with learned fantasy, and thine epigrams keen and quaint. and thy noble epitaphs, under which the dead seem stirring! Fletcher, thou shalt be with us—prophet of "Comus" and "Penseroso"! giddy with inhalation from the fount of the beautiful. speaking out wildly thought upon thought, measure upon measure, as the bird sings, because his own voice is lovely to him. Sidney, true knight and fantastic poet, whose soul did too curiously inquire the fashion of the beautiful-the fashion rather than the secret, -but left us in one line the completest "Ars Poetica" extant,-

Foole, sayde my Muse to mee, looke in thine heart, and write,-

thy name be famous in all England and Arcadia! And Raleigh, tender and strong, of voice sweet enough to answer that " Passionate Shepherd," yet trumpet-shrill to speak the "Soul's errand" thrilling the depths of our own! having honour and suffering as became a poet, from the foot of the Lady of England light upon his cloak, to the cloak of of great hearts and afterwards his executioner wrapping redly his breathless corpse. me" sounds passionately still through the dead cold centuries. And Drummond, the overpraised and underpraised,—a passive poet, if we may use the phraseology-who was not careful to achieve greatness, but whose natural pulses beat music, and with whom the consciousness of life was the sentiment of beauty. And Lyly, shriven from the sins of his "Euphues," with a quaint grace in his songs; and Donne, who takes his place naturally in this new class, having a dumb angel, and knowing more noble poetry than he articulates. Herrick, the Ariel of poets, sucking "where the bee sucks" from the rose-heart of nature, and reproducing the fragrance idealised; and Carew, using all such fragrance as a courtly essence, with less of self-abandonment and more of artificial application; and Herbert, with his face as the face of a spirit, dimly bright; and fantastic Quarles, in rude and graphic gesticulation, expounding verity and glory; and Breton, and Turberville, and Lodge, and Hall (not the satirist), and all the hundred swans, nameless or too numerous to be named, of that Cayster of the rolling time.

Then, high in the miraculous climax, come the dramatists-from whose sinews was knit the overcoming strength of our literature over " The all the nations of the world. drama is the executive of literature." said De Staël: and the Greek's "action, action, action," we shall not miss in our drama. Honour to the dramatists, as honour from

We must take a few steps backward for position's sake, and then be satisfied with a rapid glance at the Drama. From the days of Norman William, the representations called Mysteries and Moralities had come and gone without a visible poet; and Skelton appears before us almost the first English claimant of a dramatic reputation, with the authorship of the interludes of "Magnificence"

Marlowe,—we and the "Nigromansir." The latter must not forget his "Shepherd" in is chiefly famous for Warton's affirhis tragedies: and "Come live with mation of having held it in his hands, giving courteous occasion to Ritson's denial of its existence: and our own palms having never been crossed by the silver of either, we cannot prophesy on the degree of individual honour involved in the literary claim. Bale, one of the eighth Henry's bishops, was an active composer of Moralities; and John Heywood, his royal jester and author of that very merry interlude" called "The Four P's," united in his merriment that caustic sense with that lively ease, which have not been too common since in his accomplished dramatic posterity. Yet those who in the bewilderment of their admirations (or senses) attribute to John Heywood the "Pinner of Wakefield," are more obviouslywe are sorely tempted to add more ridiculously-wrong, than those who attribute it to Shakespeare. Canon of Windsor's "Ralph Royster Doyster," and the Bishop of Bath and Wells's "Gammer Gurton," followed each other close into light, the earliest modern comedies, by the force of the âme ecclésiastique. A little after came Ferrys, memorialised by Puttenham as "the principal man of his profession" (of poetry), and "of no lesse myrthe and felicitie than John Heywood, but of much more skille and magnificence in his meter." But seeing that even Oblivion forgot Ferrys, leaving his name and Puttenham's praise when she defaced his works, and seeing, too, the broad farcedom of the earlier, however episcopal, writers, we find ourselves in an unwilling posture of recognition before Edwards, as the first extant regular dramatist of England. It is a pitiful beginning. "The Four P's" would be a more welcome A to us. They express more power with their inarticulate roughness than does this "Damon and Pythias," with its rhymed, loitering frigidity, or even than this "Palamon and Arcite," in which the sound of the hunting horn cast into ecstasy the too gracious

soul of Oueen Elizabeth. But Sir John Davies's divine Astræa was, at that grey dawn of her day, ignorant of greater poets; and we (" happy in this") go on toward them. After Edwards, behold Sackville with that "Gorboduc" we have named, the first blank verse tragedy we can name, praised by Sidney for its exemplary preservation of unities and for "climbing to the his stile,"height of Seneca tight-fitting praise, considering that the composition is high enough to account for its snow, and cold enough to emulate the Roman's. And after Sackville, behold the first dramatic geniuses, in juxtaposition with the first dramatists—Peele, and Kyd, mad as his own Hieronimo (we will grant it to such critics as are too utterly in their senses), only—

When he is mad. Then, methinks, he is a brave fellow! and then, methinks, and by such madness, the possibility of a Shakespeare was revealed. Kyd's blank verse is probably the first breaking of the true soil; and certainly far better and more dramatic than Marstands before us-poet of the English against the German, nor set up its grand, luxurious, melancholy devil against Goethe's subtle, biting, Voltairish devil, each being devil after Shakespeare drew (not), yet a true the "Gorboduc" scarcely can be called one. Marlowe was more essentially a poet than a dramatist: of gifted dramatists, "ho lived, or at " rank popular breath" in his nos-

least wrote, rather before Shakespeare than with him, and helped to make him credible. Through them, like a lens, we behold his light. Of them we conjecture—these are the blind elements working before the earthquake,-before the great "Shake. scene," as Greene said when he was cross. And we may say when we are fanciful, these are the experiments of Nature, made in her solution of the problem of how much deathless poetry will agree with how much mortal clay-these are the potsherd vessels half filled, and failing at last,until up to the edge of one, the liquid inspiration rose and bubbled in hot beads to quench the thirsty lips of the world.

It is hard to speak of Shakespeare; these measures of the statures of common poets fall from our hands when we seek to measure him: it is harder to praise him. Like the tall plane-tree which Xerxes found standing in the midst of an open country, and honoured inappropriately with his "barbaric pomp," with bracelets and chains and rings suspended on its branches, so has it been with Shakespeare. A thousand critics lowe's is-crowned poet as the latter have commended him with praises as unsuitable as a gold ring to a plane-"Faustus," which we will not talk of tree. A thousand hearts have gone out to him, carrying necklaces. Some have discovered that he individualised, and some that he generalised, and some that he subtilised-almost its kind,—the poet of the Jew which trans-transcendentally. Some would have it that he was a wild genius, Jew "with a berde,"—and the poet sowing wild oats and stealing deer of the first historical drama, -- since to the end, with no more judgment forsooth than "youth the hare;" and some, that his very pulses beat by that critical law of art in which and if the remark appear self-evident he was blameless: -some, that all and universally applicable, we will his study was in his horn-book, and take its reverse in Kyd, who was not much of that; and some, that more essentially, with all his dramatic he was as learned a polyglot as ever faults, a dramatist than a poet. Pass- had been dull but for Babel:ing from the sound of the elemental some, that his own ideal burned steadmonotonies of the rhythm of Marlowe, fastly within his own fixed contemwe cannot pause before Nash and plations, unstirred by breath from Greeneto distinguish their characteris- without; and some, that he wrote tics. It is enough to name these names for the gold on his palm and the trils, apart from consciousness of greatness and desire of remembrance. If the opinions prove nothing, their contradictions prove the exaltation of the object; their contradictions are praise. For men differ about things above their reach, not within it; - about the mountains in the moon, not Primrose Hill: and more than seven cities of men have differed in their talk about Homer also. Homer, also, was convicted of indiscreet nodding; and Homer, also, had no manner of judgment, and the "Ars Poetica" people we find another analogy. We, who have no leaning to the popular cant of Romanticism and Classicism, and helieve the old Greek BEAUTY to be both new and old, and as alive and not more grey in Webster's " Duchess of Malfy" than in Æschylus's "Eumenides," do reverence this Homer and this Shakespeare as the colossal borderers of the two intellectual departments of the world's age,-do behold from their feet the antique and modern literatures sweep outwardly away, and conclude, that whereas the Greek bore in his depth the seed and prophecy of all the Hellenic and Roman poets, so did Shakespeare, "whose seed was in himself" also, those of a later generation.

For the rest we must speak briefly of Shakespeare, and very weakly too, except for love. That he was a great natural genius nobody, we believe, has doubted—the fact has passed with the cheer of mankind; but that he was a great artist the majority has doubted. Yet Nature and Art cannot be reasoned apart into antagonisficance out of the infinite of God's embraced him, in reply. Well ap-

doing into the finite of man's comprehending. Art lives by Nature, and not the bare mimetic life generally attributed to Art: she does not imitate, she expounds. Interpres naturæ-is the poet-artist; and the poet wisest in nature is the most artistic poet: and thus our Shakespeare passes to the presidency unquestioned, as the greatest artist in the world. We believe in his judgment as in his genius. We believe in his learning, both of books and men, and hills and valleys: in his grammars and dictionaries we do not believe: could not abide his bad taste. And In his philosophy of language we believe absolutely: in his Babellearning, not at all. We believe reverently in the miracle of his variety; and it is observable that we become aware of it less by the numerousness of his persons and their positions, than by the depth of the least of either,-by the sense of visibility beyond what we see, as in nature. Our creed goes on to declare him most passionate and most rational-of an emotion which casts us into thought, of a reason which leaves us open to emotion: most grave and most gay-while we scarcely can guess that the man Shakespeare is grave or gay, because he interposes between ourselves and his personality the whole breadth and length of his ideality. His associative facultv-the wit's faculty besides the poet's,—for him who was both wit and poet, shed sparks like an electric wire. He was wise in the world, having studied it in his heart; what is called "the knowledge of the world" being just the knowledge of one heart, and certain exterior symbols. What else? tic principles. Nature is God's art- What otherwise could he, the young the accomplishment of a spiritual transgressor of Sir Thomas Lucy's significance hidden in a sensible fences, new from Stratford and the symbol. Poetic art (man's) looks Avon, close in theatric London, have past the symbol with a divine guess seen or touched or handled of the and reach of soul into the mystery of Hamlets and Lears and Othellos, the significance, disclosing from the that he should draw them? "How analysis of the visible things the can I take portraits," said Marmon-synthesis or unity of the ideal,—and tel, in a similar inexperience, "before expounds like symbol and like signi- I have beheld faces?" Voltaire

plauded, Voltaire! It was a mot for Marmontel's utterance, and Voltaire's praise-for Marmontel, not for Shakespeare. Every being is his own centre to the universe, and in himself must one foot of the compasses be fixed to attain to any measurement: nay, every being is his own mirror to the universe. Shakespeare wrote from within—the beautiful; and we recognise from within-the true. He is universal, because he is individual. And without any prejudice of admiration, we may go on to account his faults to be the proofs of his power; the cloud of dust cast up by the multitude of the chariots. The activity of his associative faculty is occasionally morbid: in the abundance of his winged thoughts, the locust flies with the bee, and the ground is dark with the shadow of them. Take faults, take excellences, it is impossible to characterise this Shakespeare by an epithet: have we heard the remark before, that it should sound so obvious? We say of Corneille, the noble; of Racine, the tender; of Æschylus, the terrible; of Sophocles, the perfect; but not one of these words, not one appropriately descriptive epithet, can we attach to Shakespeare without a conscious recoil. Shakespeare! the name is the description.

He is the most wonderful artist in blank verse of all in England, and almost the earliest. We do not say that he first broke the enchaining monotony, of which the Sackvilles and the Marlowes left us complaining; because the versification of "Hieronimo" ran at its own strong will, and the "Pinner of Wakefield" may have preceded his first plays. We do not even say, what we might, that found in his writings, the reason of his hand first proved the compass and infinite modulation of the new instrument: but we do say, that it never answered another hand as it answered to the hard woods: it was lancehis. We do say, this fingering was never learned of himself by another. From Massinger's more resonant majesty, from even Fletcher's more numerous and artful cadences, we have been the same if he, too, had turn back to his artlessness of art, to known "little Latin and lesse Greek."

his singular and supreme estate as a versificator. Often when he is at the sweetest, his words are poor monosyllables, his pauses frequent to brokenness, and the structure of the several lines less varied than was taught after Fletcher's masterdom: but the whole results in an ineffable charming of the ear which we acquiesce in without seeking its cause, a happy mystery of music.

This is little for Shakespeare; yet so much for the place, that we are forced into brevities for our observations which succeed. We chronicle only the names of Chapman, Dekker, Webster, Tourneur, Randolph, Middleton, and Thomas Heywood, although great names, and worthy, it is not too much to add, of Shakespeare's brotherhood. Many besides lean from our memory to the paper, but we put them away reverently. It was the age of the dramatists-the age of strong passionate men, scattering on every side their good and evil oracles of vehement humanity, and extenuating no thought in its word: and in that age "to write like a man" was a deed accomplished by many besides him of whom it was spoken, Jonson's "son Cartwright."

At Jonson's name we stop perforce, and do salutation in the dust to the impress of that "learned sock." He was a learned man, as everybody knows; and, as everybody does not believe, not the worse for his learning. His material, brought laboriously from East and West, is wrapped in a flame of his own. If the elasticity and abandonment of Shakespeare and of certain of Shakespeare's brothers are not the defects need not be sought out in his readings. His genius, high and verdant as it drew, yet belonged wood rather than bow-wood-a genius rather noble than gracefuleloquent, with a certain severity and emphasis of enunciation. It would

There was a dash of the rhetorical in his dramatic. Not that we deny him empire over the passions: his heart had rhetoric as well as his understanding, and he wrote us a "Sad Shepherd," as well as a "Catiline." His versification heaves heavily with thought. For his comic powers, let "Volpone" and "The Alchymist" attest them with that unextinguishable laughter which is the laughter of gods or poets still more than of the wits' coffee-house. Was it "done at the Mermaid," was it ever fancied there that "rare Ben Jonson " should be called a pedantic poet? Nav. but only a scholastic one.

And Beaumont and Fletcher, the Castor and Pollux of this starry poetic sphere (lucida sidera), our silence shall not cover them; nor will we put asunder, in our speech, the names which friendship and poetry joined together, nor distinguish, by a laboured analysis, the vivacity of one from the solidity of the other; seeing that men who, according to tradition, lived in one house, and wore one cloak, and wrote on one page, may well, by the sanctity of that one grave they have also in common, maintain for ever beyond it the unity they coveted. The characteristics of these writers stand out in a softened light from the deep tragic background of the times. We may liken them to Shakespeare in one mood of his mind, because there are few classes of beauty the type or likeness of which is not discoverable in Shakespeare. From the rest they stand out contrastingly, as the Apollo of the later Greek sculptureschool,—too graceful for divinity and too vivacious for marble,placed in a company of the antiquer statues with their grand blind look cannot say of these poets, as of the obvious than the strength; and there with him, producing at once con-

may be something centauresque and of twofold nature in their rushing mutabilities, and changes on passion and weakness. Clearest of all is that they wrote like poets, and in a versification most surpassingly musical though liberal, as if music served them for love's sake, unbound! They had an excellent genius, but not a strong enough invention to include judgment; judgment being the consistency of invention, and consistency always, whether in morals or literature, depending upon strength. We do not, in fact, find in them any perfect and covenanted whole-we do not find it in character, or in plot, or in composition; and lamenting the defect on many grounds, we do so on this chief one, that their good is just good, their evil just evil, unredeemed into good like Shakespeare's and Nature's evil by unity of design, but lying apart, a willingly chosen, through and through eviland "by this time it stinketh." If other results are less lamentable, they are no less fatal. The mirror which these poets held up to us is vexed with a thousand cracks, and everything visible is in fragments. Their conceptions all tremble on a peradventure—" peradventure they shall do well:" there is no royal absolute will that they should do well: the poets are less kings than workmen. And being workmen they are weak-the moulds fall from their hands—are clutched with a spasm or fall with a faintness. After which querulousness, we shall leave the question as to whether their tragic or comic powers be put to more exquisite use, -not for solution, nor for doubt (since we hold fast an opinion), but for praise the most rarely appropriate or possible.

One passing word of Ford, the of the almightiness of repose. We pathetic—for he may wear on his sleeve the epithet of Euripides, and rest, "they write all like men;" we no daw peck there. Most tender is cannot think they write like women he, yet not to feebleness-most lither: perhaps they write a little mournful, yet not to languor; yet like centaurs. We are of opinion we like to hear the war-horse leaps of in any way, that the grace is more Dekker on the same tragic ground

trast and completeness. Ungrateful thought! the "Witch of Edmonton" bewitched us to it. Ford can fill the ear and soul singly with the trumpetnote of his pathos; and in its pauses you shall hear the murmuring voices of nature,—such a nightingale, for instance, as never sang on a common night. Then that death scene in the "Broken Heart!" who has equalled that? It is single in the drama,-the tragic of tragedy, and the sublime of grief. A word, too, of Massinger, who writes all like a giant—a dry-eyed giant. He is from those subtle influences which too ostentatiously strong for flexibility, and too heavy for rapidity, and monotonous through his perpetual final trochee; his gesture and enunciation are slow and majestic. And another word of Shirley, an inferior writer, though touched, to our fancy, with something of a finer ray, and closing, in worthy purple, the procession of the Elizabethan men. Shirley is the last dramatist. Valete et plaudite, O posteri.

backward and before, we become aware of the distinct demarcations of five eras of English poetry: the first, the Chaucerian, although we might call it Chaucer; the second, the indeed, without gradation. Elizabethan; the third, which culminates in Cowley; the fourth, in Dryden and the French school; the fifth, the return to nature in Cowper even in Drayton, we felt the cold and his successors of our day. These foreshadow of a change. The word five rings mark the age of the fair and stingless serpent we are impelled, like the ancient mariner, to bless-but not "unaware." "Ah benedicite!" we bless her so, out of our Chaucer's rubric, softly, but with a plaintiveness of pleasure. For when the last echo of the Elizabethan harmonies had died away with Shirley's footsteps, in the twilight of that golden day; when Habington and Lovelace, and every last bird before nightfall was dumb, and Crashaw's fine rapture, holy as a summer sense of silence, left us to the stars—the first voices startling the thinker from his reverting thoughts, are verily of another spirit. The voices are elo- and catching occasionally

quent enough, thoughtful enough, fanciful enough; but something is defective. Can any one suffer, as an experimental reader, the transition between the second and third periods, without feeling that something is defective? What is so? And who dares to guess that it may be in-SPIRATION ?

"Poetry is of too spiritual a nature," Mr. Campbell has observed, "to admit of its authors being exactly grouped by a Linnar system of classification." Nevertheless, poets render and receive, and from other causes less obvious but no less operative, it has resulted even to ourselves in this slight survey of the poets of our country, that the signs used by us simply as signs of historical demarcation have naturally fallen or risen into signs of poetical classification. The five eras we spoke of just now, have indeed each a characteristic as clear in poetry as in chronology; and a Standing in his traces, and looking deeper gulf than an Anno Domini vawns betwixt an Elizabethan man and a man of that third era upon which we are entering. The change of the poetical characteristic was not, hands of the clock had been moving silently for a whole hour before the new one struck; and even in Davies, " sweetness," which presses into our sentences against the will of our rhetoric whenever we speak of Shakespeare ("sweetest Shakespeare") or his kin, we lose the taste of in the later waters; they are brackish with another age.

In what did the change consist? Practically and partially in the idolworship of vhyme. Among the elder poets, the rhyme was only a felicitous adjunct, a musical accompaniment, the tinkling of a cymbal through the choral harmonies. You heard it across the changes of the pause, as an undertone of the chant, marking the time with an audible indistinctness,

reformers,-" except the legitimate pause at the tenth rhyming syllaalone take the incense from our altars, men.

Moreover, the corruption of the versification was but a type of the change in the poetry itself, and sufficiently expressive. The accession to the throne of the poets, of the wits in the new current sense of the term, or of the beaux esprits—a term to be used the more readily because descriptive of the actual pestilential influence of French literature—was accompanied by the substitution of elegant thoughts for poetic conceptions (" elegant," alas! beginning to be the critical pass-word), of adroit illustrations for beautiful images, of ingenuity for genius. Yet this third era is only the preparation for the fourth consummating one—the hesitation before the crime: we smell the blood through it in the bath-room. And our fancy grows hysterical, like poor Octavia, while the dismal extent of the "quantum mutatus" develops itself in detail.

"Waller's sweetness!" it is a needy antithesis to Denham's strengthand, if anything beside, a sweetness as far removed from that which we have lately recognised, as the saccharine the ear. Will Saccharissa frown at Edmund Waller. our comparison from the high sphere

reflecting the full light of the pleases," please to oversleep our emphasis of the sense in mutual offence? It is certain that we but elucidation. But the new practice walk in her footsteps in our disdain endeavoured to identify in all possi- of her poet, even if we disdain himble cases the rhyme and what may and most seriously we disown any be called the sentimental emphasis; such partaking of her "crueltie." securing the latter to the tenth rhym Escaping from the first astonishment ing syllable, and so dishonouring the of an unhappy transition, and from emphasis of the sentiment into the what is still more vexing, those "base, base use of the marking of the time. common, and popular "critical voices, And not only by this unnatural pro- which, in and out of various " arts of vision did the emphasis minister to poetry," have been pleased to fix the rhyme, but the pause did it also, upon this same transitional epoch "Away with all pauses,"—said the as the genesis of excellence to our language and versification, we do not,. we hope it of ourselves, undervalue Orhyme, live for ever! Rhyme Waller. There is a certain grace "beyond the reach of art," or rather -tinkling cymbal alone be our beyond the destructive reach of his music!"-And so arose, in dread ideas of art, to which, we opine, if insignificance, the Heart-and-impart he had not been a courtier and a renegade, the Lady Dorothea might have bent her courtly head unabashed, even as the Penshurst beeches did. We gladly acknowledge in him, as in Denham and other poets of the transition, an occasional remorseful recurrence by half lines and whole lines, or even a few lines together, to the poetic Past. We will do anything but agree with Mr. Hallam, who, in his excellent and learned work on the Literature of Europe, has passed some singular judgments upon the poets, and none more startling than his comparison of Waller to Milton, on the ground of the sustenance of power. The crying truth is louder than Mr. Hallam, and cries, in spite of Fame, with whom poor Walker was an enfant trouvé, an heir by chance, rather than merit, - that he is feeble poetically quite as surely as morally and politically, and that, so far from being an equal and sustained poet, he has not strength for unity even in his images, nor for continuity in his thoughts, nor for adequacy in his expression, nor for harmony in his versification. This is at least our of the palate from the melodious of strong and sustained impression of

With a less natural gift of poetry of his verse? or will she, a happy than Waller, Denham has not only "lady who can sleep when she more strength of purpose and lan-

guage (an easy superiority), but some strength in the abstract: he puts forth rather a sinewy hand to the new structure of English versification. It is true, indeed, that in his only poem which survives to any competent popularity—his" Cooper's Hill" -we may find him again and again, by an instinct to a better principle, receding to the old habit of the medial pause, instead of the would-be sufficiency of the final one. But, generally, he is true to his modern sect of the Pharisees; and he helps their prosperity otherwise by adopting that Pharisaic fashion of setting forth, vaingloriously, a little virtue the associative or suggestive faculty of thought and poetry in pointed and antithetic expression, which all the wits delighted in, from himself, a chief originator, to Pope, the perfecter. The famous lines, inheriting by entail a thousand critical admirations-

Strong without rage, without o'erflowing full,

and, as Sydney Smith might put in, "a great many other things," contain the germ and prophecy of the whole Queen Anne's generation. For the rest, we will be brief in our melancholy, and say no more of Denham that than he was a Dryden in small.

The genius of the new school was its anomaly, even Abraham Cowley. We have said nothing of "the metaphysical poets" because we disclaim the classification, and believe with Mr. Leigh Hunt, that every poet, inasmuch as he is a poet, is a metaphysician. In taking note, therefore, of this Cowley, who stands on the very vibratory soll of the transition, and stretches his faltering and protesting hands on either side to the old and to the new, let no one brand him for "metaphysics." He was a true poet, both by natural constitution and cultivation, but without the poet's heart. His admirers have compared him to Pindar; and, taking Pindar out of his rapture, they may do so still: he was a Pindar writing by mélier rather than by verve. In rapidity and subtlety of the

associative faculty, which, however, with him, moved circularly rather than onward, he was sufficiently Pindaric: but, as it is a fault in the Greek lyrist to leave his buoyancy to the tumultuous rush of his associations too unmisgivingly and entirely for the right reverence of Unity in Beauty, -so is it the crime of the English poet to commit coldly what the other permitted passively, and with a conscious volition, quick yet calm, calm when quickest, to command from the ends of the universe the associations of material sciences and spiritual philosophies. Quickness of is common, we have had occasion to observe, to the wit (in the modern sense) and the poet; its application only, being of a reverse difference. Cowley confounded the application, and became a witty poet. The Elizabethan writers were inclined to a too curious illuminating of thought by imagery. Cowley was coarsely curious: he went to the shambles for his chambers of imagery, and very often through the mud. All which faults appear to us attributable to his coldness of temperament, and his defectiveness in the instinct towards Beauty; to having the intellect only of a great poet, not the sensibility. His "Davideis," our first epic in point of time, has fine things in it. His translations, or rather paraphrases, of Anacreon are absolutely the most perfect of any English composition of their order. His other poems contain profuse material, in image and reflection, for the accomplishment of three poets, each greater than himself. He approached the beautiful and the true as closely as mere Fancy could; but that very same Fancy, unfixed by feeling, too often, in the next breath, approximated him to the hideous and the false. Noble thoughts are in Cowleywe say noble, and we might say sublime; but, while we speak, he falls below the first praise. Yet his influence was for good rather than for evil, by inciting to a struggle backward, a delay in the revolutionary movement: and this although a wide gulf yawned between him and the former age, and his heart's impulse was not strong enough to cast him across it. For his actual influence, he lifts us up and casts us downcharms, and goes nigh to disgust us —does all but make us love and

weep. And then came "glorious John," with the whole fourth era in his arms; -and eloquent above the sons of men, to talk down, thunder down poetry as if it were an exhalation. Do we speak as if he were not a poet? nay, but we speak of the character of his influences; nay, but he was a poet —an excellent poet—in marble: and Phidias, with the sculpturesque ideal separated from his working tool, might have carved him. He was a poet without passion, just as Cowley was: but, then, Cowley lived by fancy, and that would have been poor living for John Dryden. Unlike Cowley, too, he had an earnestness which of itself was influential. He was inspired in his understanding and his senses only; but to the point of disenchanting the world most marvellously. He had a large soul for a man, containing sundry Queen Anne's men, one within another, like quartetto tables; but it was not a large soul for a poet, and it entertained the universe by potato-patches. He established finally the reign of the literati for the reign of the poetsand the critics clapped their hands. He established finally the despotism of the final emphasis—and no one dared, in affecting criticism, to speak any more at all against a tinkling cymbal. And so, in distinctive succession to poetry and inspiration, began the new system of harmony "as by law established;" and so he translated Virgil not only into English but into Dryden; and so he was kind. enough to translate Chaucer too, as an example,—made him a much finer speaker, and not, according to our doxy, so good a versifier—and cured the readers of the old "Knight's so he reasoned powerfully in verse- | benediction, providing for greatness,

and threw into verse, besides, the whole force of his strong sensual being; and so he wrote what has been called from generation to generation, down to the threshold of our days, "the best ode in the English language." To complete which successes, he thrust out nature with a fork; and for a long time, and in spite of Horace's prophecy, she never came back again. Do we deny our gratitude and his glory to glorious John because we speak thus? In nowise would we do it. He was a man greatly endowed; and our language and our literature remain, in certain respects, the greater for his greatness-more practical, more rapid, and with an air of mixed freedom and adroitness which we welcome as an addition to the various powers of either. With regard to his influence-and he was most influential upon POETRY—we have spoken: and have the whole of the opening era from which to prove.

While we return upon our steps for a breathing moment, and pause before Milton, -the consideration occurs to us that a person of historical ignorance in respect to this divine poet, would hesitate and be at a loss to which era of our poetry to attach him through the internal evidence of his works. He has not the tread of a contemporary of Dryden; and Rochester's nothingness is a strange accompaniment to the voice of his greatness. Neither can it be quite predicated of him that he walks an Elizabethan man; there is a certain fine bloom or farina, rather felt than seen, upon the old poems, unrecognised upon his. But the love of his genius leant backward to those olden oracles; and it is pleasant to think that he was actually born before Shakespeare's death; that they too looked upwardly to the same daylight and stars; and that he might have stretched his baby arms (" animosus infans") to the faint hazel eyes of the poet of poets. Let us think in anywise that he drew in Tale "of sundry of their tears; and some living subtle Shakespearan

The Italian poets had "rained renunciation, and the working on, influence" on the Elizabethan "field on, under the stripe? He did what of the cloth of gold;" and from the was hardest. He was Agonistes Italian poets as well as the classical building up, instead of pulling down; sources and the elder English ones, and his high religious fortitude gave did Milton accomplish his soul. Yet a character to his works. He stood the poet Milton was not made by in the midst of those whom we are what he received; not even by what forced to consider the corrupt versihe loved. High above the current of ficators of his day, an iconoclast of poetical influences he held his own their idol rhyme, and protesting grand personality; and there never practically against the sequestration lived poet in any age (unless we as- of pauses. His lyrical poems, move sume ignorantly of Homer) more they ever so softly, step loftily, and isolated in the contemporaneous with something of an epic air. His world than he. He was not worked sonnets are the the first sonnets of a upon from out of it, nor did he work free rhythm-and this although outwardly upon it. As Cromwell's Shakespeare and Spenser were sonsecretary and Salmasius's antagonist, neteers. His "Comus," and "Samhe had indeed an audience; but as a son," and "Lycidas,"—how are we poet, a scant one; his music, like to praise them? His epic is the the spherical tune, being inaudible second to Homer's, and the first in because too fine and high. It is sublime effects—a sense as of divine almost awful to think of him issuing benediction flowing through it from from the arena of controversy end to end. Not that we compare, victorious and blind,-putting away for a moment, Milton's genius with from his dark brows the bloody Homer's; but that Christianity is laurel, left alone after the heat of in the poem besides Milton. If we the day by those for whom he had hazard a remark which is not admiracombated; and originating in that tion, it shall be this—that with all his

enforced dark quietude his epic heights and breadths (which we may vision for the inward sight of the measure geometrically if we please unborn; so to avenge himself on the from the "Davideis" of Cowley) world's neglect by exacting from it an | with all his rapt devotions and exaleternal future of reminiscence. The tations towards the highest of all, circumstances of the production of we do miss something (we, at least, his great work are worthy in majesty who are writing, miss something) of of the poem itself; and the writer is what may be called, but rather the ideal to us of the majestic per- metaphysically than theologically, sonality of a poet. He is the stu-spirituality. His spiritual persondent, the deep thinker, the patriot, ages are vast enough, but not rarefied the believer, the thorough brave enough. They are humanities, enman,—breathing freely for truth and larged, uplifted, transfigured—but freedom under the leaden weights of no more. In the most spiritual of his his adversities, never reproaching spirits there is a conscious, obvious, God for his griefs by his despair, even ponderous materialism. And working in the chain, praying without hence comes the celestial gunpowder, ceasing in the serenity of his sightless and hence the clashing with swords, eyes; and, because the whole visible and hence the more continuous evil universe was swept away from be-twixt them and the Creator, contem-the thick atmosphere clouding the plating more intently the invisible heights of the subject. And if anyinfinite, and shaping all his thoughts body should retort, that complaining to it in grander proportion. O so we complain of Milton's humanity noble Christian poet! Which is -we shake our heads. For Shakehardest? self-renunciation, and the speare also was a man; and our sackcloth and the cave-or grief-creed is, that the "Midsummer

Night's Dream "displays more of the is actually injured and precisely in fairvhood of fairies than the "Paradise Lost" does of the angelhood of angels. The example may serve the purpose of explaining our objection; both leaving us room for the one remark more—that Ben Jonson and John Milton, the most scholastic of our poets, brought out of their scholarship different gifts to our language: that Jonson brought more Greek, and Milton more Latin; while the influences of the latter and greater poet were at once more slowly and more extensively effectual.

Butler was the contemporary of Milton: we confess a sort of continuous "innocent surprise" in the thought of it, however the craziness of our imagination may be in fault. We have stood by as witnesses while the great poet sanctified the visible earth with the oracle of his blindness; and are startled that a profane voice should be hardy enough to break the echo, and jest in the new consecrated temple. But this is rather a Roundheaded than a longheaded way of adverting to poor Butler; who, for all his gross injustice to the purer religionists, in the course of "flattering the vices and daubing hands either to be treated as a poet or punished for being a contemporary of the poet Milton. Butler's business was the business of desecration, the exact reverse of a poet's; and by the admission of all the world his business is well done. His learning is various and extensive, and his fancy communicates to it its mobility. His wit has a gesture of authority, as if it might, if it pleased, be wisdom. His power over language, "tattered and ragged " like Skelton's, is as wonderful as his power over images. And if nobody can commend the design of his "Hudibras," which is the English counterpart of "Don Quixote,"—a more objectionable

an inverse ratio, by the burlesque copy of the burlesque, -everybody must admit the force of the execution. When Prior attempted afterwards the same line of composition with his peculiar grace and airiness of diction, —when Swift ground society into jests with a rougher turning of the wheel,-still, then and since, has this Butler stood alone. He is the genius of his class; a natural enemy to poetry under the form of a poet: not a great man, but a powerful man.

We return to the generation of. Dryden and to Pope his inheritor— Pope, the perfecter, as we have already taken occasion to call himwho stood in the presence of his father Dryden, before that energetic soul, weary with its long literary work which was not always clean and noble, had uttered its last wisdom or foolishness through the organs of the body. Unfortunately, Pope had his advisers apart from his muses; and their counsel was "be correct." To be correct, therefore, to be great through correctness, was the end of his ambition, an asspiration scarcely more calculated for the production of noble poems the iniquities" of King Charles's than the philosophy of utilitarianism court, does scarcely deserve at our is for that of lofty virtues. Yet correctness seemed a virtue rare in the land; Dr. Johnson having crowned Lord Roscommon over Shakespeare's head, "the only correct writer before Addison." The same critic predicated of Milton, that he could not cut figures upon cherry-stones. Pope glorified correctness, and dedicated himself to cherry-stones from first to last. A cherry-stone was the apple of his eve.

Now we are not about to take up any popular cry against Pope; he has been overpraised and is underpraised; and, in the silence of our poetical experience, ourselves may confess personally to the guiltiness of servility than an adaptation from a either extremity. He was not a great serious composition, in which case poet; he meant to be a correct poet, that humorous effect would have and he was what he meant to be, been increased by the travesty, which according to his construction of the

thing meant: there are few amongst us who fulfil so literally their ambitions. Moreover we will admit to our reader in the confessional, that, however convinced in our innermost opinion of the superiority of Dryden's genius, we have more pleasure in reading Pope than we ever could enjoy or imagine under Pope's master. We incline to believe that indeed, something charming even to Dryden being the greatest poet-power, an enemy's ear in this exquisite Pope is the best poet-manual; and balancing of sounds and phrases, that whatever Dryden has donewe do not say conceived, we do not say suggested, but done-Pope has done that thing better. For translations, we hold up Pope's Homer of emphasis upon rhyme and rhyme; against Dryden's Virgil and the world. Both translations are utterly and equally contrary to the antique, both bad with the same sort of excellence; but Pope's faults are Dryden's faults, while Dryden's are not Pope's. We say the like of the poems from Chaucer; we say the like of the philosophic and satirical poems; the art of reasoning in verse is admirably attained by either poet, but practised with more grace and point by the later one. To worth. For our own part, we would be sure, there is the "Alexander's sacrifice not only our point, but the Feast" ode, called, until people half prosperity of our very fingers, to believed what they said, the greatest save from a similar catastrophe these ode in the language! But here is, works of Pope; and this, although to be born with a heart, particularly for a poet. We recognise besides, in Pope, a delicate fineness of tact, of which the precise contrary is Nature, as we have observed, had unpleasantly obvious in his great been expelled by a fork, under the master; Horace Walpole's description of Selwyn, une bête inspirée, with a restriction of bete to the animal sense, fitting glorious John like his crown. Now there is nothing of in form, the sin of his school. Still this coarseness of the senses about less would we "play at bowles" enough to stand erect upon the point of Nature and of Art have been suffi-

of a needle like a Schoolman's angel; and whatever he wrote coarsely, he did not write from inward impulse, but from external conventionality, from a bad social Swift-sympathy. For the rest, he carries out his master's principles into most excellent and delicate perfection: he is rich in his degree. And there is, these "shining rows" of oppositions and appositions, this glorifying of commonplaces by antithetic processes, this catching, in the rebound, all, in short, of this Indian jugglery and Indian carving upon-cherrystones! " and she herself" (that is, poetry)-

And she herself one fair Antithesis.

When Voltaire threw his "Henriade" into the fire and Hénault rescued it, "Souvenez-vous," said the president to the poet, "that I burnt my lace ruffles for the sake of your epic." It was about as much as the epic was to make the scales even again, the the most perfect and original of all "Eloisa," with tears on it-faulty of them, "The Rape of the Lock," had but tender—of a sensibility which its fortune in a fire-safe. They are glorious John was not born with a the works of a master. A great heart for. To be sure, it was not poet? Oh no! A true poet?necessary that John Dryden should perhaps not. Yet a man, be it keep a Bolingbroke to think for him: remembered, of such mixed gracefulbut to be sure again, it is something ness and power, that Lady Mary Wortley [Montagu] deigned to coquet with him, and Dennis shook before him in his shoes.

Nature, as we have observed, had hand of Pope's progenitors; and if in him and around him we see no sign of her return, we do not blame Pope for what is, both in spirit and Pope; the little pale Queen Anne's with Byron, and praise his right use of valetudinarian had a nature fine the right poetry of Art. Our views ciently explained to leave our opinion obvious of the controversy in question, in which, as in a domestic broil, "there were faults on both sides." Let a poet never write the words "tree," "hill," "river," and he may still be true to nature. Most untrue, on the other hand, most narrow, is the poetical sectarianism, and essentially most unpoetical, which stands among the woods and fields announcing with didactic phlegm, " Here only is nature." Nature is where God is. Poetry is where God is. Can you go up or down or around, and not find Him? In the loudest hum of your your steam, in the foulest street of your city,—there, as surely as in the Brocken pinewoods, and the watery thunders of Niagara,—there, as surely as He is above all, lie Nature and Poetry in full life. Speak, and they will answer! Nature is a large meaning: let us make room for it in the comprehension of our love !- for the coral rock built up by the insect and the marble column erected by the man.

In this age of England, however, pet-named the Augustan, there was no room either for Nature or Art: Art and Nature (for we will not separate their names) were at least maimed and dejected and sickening day by day-

Quoth she, I grieve to see your leg Stuck in a hole here, like a peg;

and even so, or like the peg of a top humming drowsily, our poetry stood still. There was an abundance of "correct writers," yes, and of "elegant writers": there was Parnell, for instance, who would be called besides, a pleasing writer by any pleasing critic; and Addison, a proverb for the "virtuousest, discreetest, best" with all the world. Or if, after the Scotch mode of Monkbarns, we call our poets by their possessions, not so wronging their characteristics, there was "The Dispensary," the "Art of Preserving in broad touches; rather moving, as Health." the "Art of Cookery,"— it appears to us, by scenes thamby and "Trivia," or the "Fan,"-take words.

Gay by either of those names! and "Cider," or the "Splendid Shilling"take Phillips, Milton's imitator, by either of these! and there was Pomfret, not our "choice," the concentrate essence of namby-pambyism; and Prior, a brother spirit of the French Gresset,—a half-brother of an inferior race, yet to be praised by us for one instinct obvious in him, a blind stretching of the hand to a sweeter order of versification than was current. Of Young we could write much: he was the very genius of antithesis; a genius breaking from the system," with its broken chain machinery, in the dunnest volume of upon his limbs, and frowning darkly through the grey monotony; grander writer by spasms than by volitions. Blair was of his class, but rougher; a brawny contemplative Orson. And how many of our readers may be unaware of the underground existence of another "Excursion," than the deathless one of our days, and in blank verse, too, and in several cantos; and how nobody will thank us for digging at these fossil remains! It is better to remember Mallet by his touching ballad of "William and Margaret," a. word taken from diviner lips to becoming purpose; only we must not be thrown backupon the "Ballads," lest we wish to live with them for ever. Our literature is rich in ballads, a form epitomical of the epic and dramatic. and often vocal when no other music is astir; and to give a particular account of which would take us far across our borders.

As it is, we are across them; we are benighted in our wandering and straitened for room. We glance back vainly to the lights of the later drama, and see Dryden, who had the heart to write rhymed plays after Shakespeare, and but little heart for anything else,—and Congreve, and Lillo, and Southerne, and Rowe, all gifted writers, and Otway, master of tears, who starved in our streets for his last tragedy—a poet most effective

Returning to the general poets, we meet, with bent faces toward hillside Nature, Thomson and Dver: in writing which names together, we have read Plato; some pleasures. do not depreciate Thomson's, however we may a little exalt Dyer's. We praise neither of these writers for being descriptive poets; but for that faithful transcript of their own impressions, which is a common subject of praise in both: Dyer being more distinct, perhaps, in his images, and Thomson more impressive in his general effect. Both are faulty in their blank verse diction: the latter too florid and verbose, the former (although "Grongar Hill" is simple almost to baldness) too pedantic and constructive—far too "saponaceous" and "pomaceous." We offer pastoral salutation also to Shenstone and Hammond; pairing them like Polyphemus's sheep; fain to be fell; and oh, how sick to faintness courteous if we could: and we could grew the poetry of England! Anna if we were "Phillida." Surely it is Seward, "by'rL.dy," was the "muse" an accomplishment to utter a pretty thought so simply that the world is bard," and Hannah More wrote our forced to remember it; and that gift was Shenstone's, and he the most poetical of country gentlemen. May every shrub on the lawn of Leasowes be ever green to his brow! And next, oh most patient reader, - pressed to a conclusion and in a pairing humour, we come to Gray and Akenside together, yes, together! because if Grav had written a philosophic poem he would have written it like the "Pleasures of Imagination," and because Akenside would have written odes like Gray, if he could have commanded a rapture. Gray, studious and sitting in the cold, learnt the secret of a simulated and innocent fire (the Greek fire he might have called it), which burns beautifully to the eye, but never would have harmed M. Hénault's ruffles. Collins had twenty times the lyric genius of Gray; we feel his fire in our cheeks. Gray, but Akenside—both with a volition towards enthusiasm—have an under-constitution of most scholastic coldness: "Si vis me flere," out their pocket-handkerchiefs. We of some still living for praise, with

confess humbly, before gods and men. that we never read to the end of Akenside's "Pleasures," albeit we say the moralists, are more trying than pains. Let us turn for refreshment to Goldsmith—that amiable genius, upon whose diadem we feel our hands laid ever and anon in familiar love,—to Goldsmith, half emerged from "the system," his forehead touched with the red ray of the morning; a cordial singer. Even Johnson, the ponderous cr.tic of the system, who would hang a dog if he read "Lycidas" twice, who wrote the lives of the poets and left out the poets, even he loved Goldsmith! and Johnson was Dryden's critical bear, a rough bear, and with points of noble beardom. But while he growled the leaves of the greenwood of those days, and Mr. Hayley "the dramas, and Helen Williams our odes, and Rosa Matilda our elegiacs. and Blacklock, blind from his birth, our descriptive poems, and Mr. Whalley our "domestic epics," and Darwin our poetical philosophy, and Lady Millar encouraged literature at Bath, with red taffeta and "the vase." But the immortal are threatened vainly. It was the sickness of renewal rather than of death; St. Leon had his fainting hand on the elixir: the new era was alive in Cowper. We do not speak of him as the master of a transition, only as a hinge on which it slowly turned; only as an earnest, tender writer, and true poet enough to be true to himself. Cowper sang in England, and Thomas Warton also,—of a weaker voice but in tune: and Beattie, for whom we have too much love to analyse it, seeing that we drew our childhood's first poetic pleasure from his "Minstrel." And Burns walked in glory on the Scottish mountain's side: and everywhere Dr. Percy's collected you must weep; but they only take ballads were sowing the great hearts

impulses of greatness. It was the revival of poetry, the opening of the fifth era, the putting down of the Dryden dynasty, the breaking of the serf bondage, the wrenching of the iron from the soul. And Nature and Poetry did embrace one another! and all men who were lovers of either and of our beloved England, were enabled to resume the pride of their consciousness, and looking round the world say gently, yet gladly, "Our Poets."

When Mr. Wordsworth gave his first poems to the public, it was not well with poetry in England. The "system" riveted upon the motions of poetry by Dryden and his dynasty had gradually added to the restraint of slavery, its weakness and emasculation. The change from poetry to rhetoric had issued in another change, to the commonplaces of rhetoric. We had no longer to complain of Pope's antithetic glories: there was "a vile antithesis" for those also. The followers were not as the master; and the very facility with which the trick of acoustical mechanics was caught up by the former-admitting of "singing for the million," with ten fingers each for natural endowment, and the ability to count them for requirement,-made wider and more apparent the difference of dignity between the Popes and the Pope Joans. Little by little, by slow and desolate degrees, Thought had perished out of the way of the appointed and most beaten rhythm; and we had the beaten rhythm, without the living footstep—we had the monotony of the military movement, without the heroic impulse—the cross of the Legion of Honour, hung, as it once was, in a paroxysm of converted Bourbonism, at a horse's tail: and the "fork," which expelled Nature, dropped feebly downward, blunted of its point. And oh! to see who sat then in England in the seats of the elders! The Elizabethan men would have gnashed their teeth at such a sight; the Queen Anne's men would have multiplied Dunciads. Of the third George's men tion of publics and critics as child at

('Axaitões ouk et' Axaioi), Hayley, too good a scholar to bear to be so bad a poet, was a chief hope; and Darwin, mistaker of the optic nerve for the poetical sense, an inventive genius.

But Cowper had a great name, and Burns a greater; and the réveillé of Dr. Percy's "Reliques of English Poetry" was echoed presently by the "Scottish Minstrelsy." There was a change, a revival, an awakening, a turning, at least upon the pillow, of some who slept on in mediocrity, as if they felt the daylight on their shut eyelids: there was even a group of noble hearts (Coleridge, the idealist, poet among poets, in their midst), foreseeing the sun. Nature, the long banished, re-dawned, like the morning: Nature, the true mother, cried afar off to her children, "Children, I am here! come to me." was a hard act to come, and involved the learning and the leaving of much. Conventionalities of phrase and rhythm, conventional dialects set apart for poets, conventional words, attitudes, and manners, consecrated by "wits,"-all such Nessian trappings were to be wrenched off, even to the cuticle into which they had urged their poison. But it was an act not too hard for the doing. There was a visible movement towards Nature; the majority moving of course with reservation, but individuals with decision; some rending downward their garments of pestilent embroidery, and casting themselves at her feet. As the chief of the movement, the Xenophon of the return, we are bound to acknowledge this great Wordsworth, and to admire how, in a bravery bravest of all because born of love, in a passionate unreservedness sprung of genius, and to the actual scandal of the world which stared at the filial familiarity. he threw himself not at the feet of Nature, but straightway and right tenderly upon her bosom. And so, trustfully as child before mother, self-renouncingly as child after sin, absorbed away from the consideraplayhours, with a simplicity startling that William to the blase critical ear as inventiveness, with an innocent utterance felt by the competent thinker to be wisdom, and with a faithfulness to natural impressions acknowledged since by all to be the highest art, this William Wordsworth did sing his "Lyrical Ballads" where the "Art of criticism" had been sung before, and "the world would not let them die."

The voice of nature has a sweetness which few of us, when sufficiently tried, can gainsay; it penetrates our artificial "tastes," and overcomes us; and our ignorance seldom proves strong, in proportion to our instincts. We recognise, like Ulysses' dog, with feeble joyous gesture the master's voice: and the sound is nearly always pleasant to us, however we may want strength to follow after it. But while, at the period we refer to, the recognition and gratulation were true and deep, the old conventionalities and prejudices hung heavily in bondage and repression. The great body of readers would recoil to the Drydenic rhythm, to the Queen Anne's poetical cant, to anti-Saxonisms whether in Latin or French; or exacted, as a condition of a poet's faithfulness to nature, such an effervescence of his emotions as had rendered Pope natural in the "Eloisa." "Let us all forsooth be Eloisa, and so natural,"—the want was an excuse for loving nature; and the opinion went that the daily heartbeat was more obnoxious in poetry than the incidental palpitation. Poor Byron (true miserable genius, soul-blind great poet!) ministered to this singular need, identifying poetry and passion. Poetry ought to be the revelation of the complete man-and Byron's manhood having no completion nor entirety, consisting on the contrary of a one-sided passionateness, his poems discovered not a heart, but the wound of a heart; not humanity,

Wordsworth mitted himself to nature, but in full resolution and determinate purpose. He is scarcely, perhaps, of a passionate temperament, although still less is he cold; rather quiet in his love, as the stockdove, and brooding over it as constantly, and with as soft an inward song lapsing outwardlyserene through deepness—saying himself of his thoughts, that they "do often lie too deep for tears;" which does not mean that their painfulness will not suffer them to be wept for, but that their closeness to the supreme Truth hallows them, like the cheek of an archangel, from tears. Call him the very opposite of Byron, who, with narrower sympathies for the crowd, yet stood nearer to the crowd, because everybody understands passion. Byron was a poet through pain. Wordsworth is a feeling man because he is a thoughtful man; he knows grief itself by a reflex emotion; by sympathy, rather than by suffering. He is eminently and humanly expansive; and, spreading his infinite egotism over all the objects of his contemplation, reiterates the love, life, and poetry of his peculiar being in transcribing and chanting the material universe, and so sinks a broad gulf between his descriptive poetry and that of the Darwinian painter-poet school. Darwin was, as we have intimated, all optic nerve. Wordsworth's eye is his soul. He does not see that which he does not intellectually discern, and he beholds his own cloud-capped Helvellyn under the same conditions with which he would contemplate a grand spiritual abstraction. In his view of the exterior world-as in a human Spinozism,-mountains and men's hearts share in a sublime unity of humanity; yet his Spinozism does in nowise affront God, for he is eminently a religious poet, if not. indeed, altogether as generous and capacious in his Christianity as in his poetry; and, being a true Christian but disease; not life, but a crisis. It poet, he is scarcely least so when he was not so, it was not in the pro- is not writing directly upon the subjection of a passionate emotion, ject of religion; just as we learn sometimes without looking up, and by the mere colour of the grass, that the sky is cloudless. But what is most remarkable in this great writer is his poetical consistency. There is a wonderful unity in these multiform poems of one man: they are "bound each to each in natural piety." even as his days are: and why? because they are his days—all his days, work days and Sabbath days-his life, in fact, and not the unconnected works of his life, as vulgar men do opine of poetry and do rightly opine of vulgar poems, but the sign, seal, and representation of his life-nay, the actual audible breathing of his inward spirit's life. When Milton said that a poet's life should be a poem, he spoke a high moral truth; if he had added a reversion of the saying, that a poet's poetry should be his life,—he would have spoken a critical truth, not low.

"Foole, saide my Muse to mee, looke in thine hearte, and write,"feast times, fast times, or curfew emotion, but at all hours of the clock; again in the best of our poems. William Wordsworth wrote these common things of nature, and by no means in a phraseology or in a style. He was daring in his commonness as any of your Tamerlanes may be daring when far fetching an alien image from an outermost world; and, notwithstanding the ribald cry of that "vox populi" which has, in the criticism of poems, so little the character of divinity, and which loudly and mockingly, at his first utterance, denied the sanctity of his simplicities, —the Nature he was faithful to "betrayed not the heart which loved her." but, finally, justifying herself and him, "DID"—without the "Edinburgh Review."

speak at all-at the feet of Mr. Wordsworth,-recognising him, as we do, as poet-hero of a movement essential to the better being of poetry, as poet-prophet of utterances greater than those who first listened could comprehend, and of influences most vital and expansive—we are yet honest to confess that certain things in the "Lyrical Ballads" which most provoked the ignorant innocent hootings of the mob, do not seem to us all heroic. Love, like ambition, may overvault itself; and Betty Fovs of the Lake school (so called) may be as subject to conventionalities as Pope's Lady Bettys. And, perhaps, our great poet might. through the very vehemence and nobleness of his hero and prophetwork for nature, confound, for some blind moment, and by an association easily traced and excused, nature with rusticity, the simple with the bald; and even fall into a vulgar conventionality in the act of spurnand not only, we must repeat, at ing a graceful one. If a trace of such confounding may occasionally times—not only at times of crisis and be perceived in Mr. Wordsworth's earlier poetry, few critics are mad for that which God thought good enough, to-day, to catch at the loose enough to write, or permit the writing straws of the full golden sheaf and of, on His book, the heart, is not too deck out withal their own arrogant common, let us be sure, to write fronts, in the course of mouthing mocks at the poet. The veriest critic of straw knoweth well, at this hour of the day, that if Mr. Wordsworth was ever over-rustic, it was not through incapacity to be right royal; that of all poets, indeed, who have been kings in England, not one leas swept the purple with more majesty than this poet, when it hath pleased him to be majestic. Vivat rex, and here is a new volume of his reign. Let us rejoice, for the sake of literature and the age, in the popularity which is ready for it, and in the singular happiness of a great poet living long enough to rebound from the "fell swoop" of his poetical destiny, survive the ignorance of his public, and convict "Hero-worshippers," as we are, the prejudices of his reviewers. It and sitting for all the critical pre- is a literal "poetical justice," and tence—in right or wrong of which we one rarest of all, that a great poet

should stand in a permitted sovereignty, without doing so, like poor Inez de Castro, by right of death. It is almost wonderful that his country should clap her hands in praise of him, before he has ceased to hear: the applause resembles an anachronism. Is Mr. Wordsworth startled at receiving from his contemporaries what he expected only from posterity?-is he asking himself " Have I done anything wrong?" Probably not: it is at least with his usual air of calm and advised dignity that he addresses his new volume in its "Envoy":

Go single,—vet aspiring to be joined With thy forerunners, that through many a year

Have faithfully prepared each other's wav-

Go forth upon a mission best fulfilled When and wherever, in this changeful world.

Power hath been given to please for higher

Than pleasure only; gladdening to prepare

For wholesome sadness, troubling to refine,

Calming to raise,

-words of the poet which form a nobler description of the character and uses of his poetry than could be given in any words of a critic.

We do not say that the finest of Mr. Wordsworth's productions are to be found or should be looked for in the present volume; but the volume is worthy of its forerunners, consistent in noble earnestness and serene philoscophy, true poet's work,—the hand trembling not a jot for years or weariness,—the full face of the soul turned hopefully and stilly as ever towards the True, and catching across its ridge the idealised sunlight of the Beautiful. And yet if we were recording angel, instead of only recording reviewer, we should drop a tear—another—and end by weeping out that series of sonnets in favour of capital punishments, -moved that a hand which has traced life-warrants so long for the literature of England, should thus sign a mis- himself to embrace anything; a

placed "Benedicite" over the hangman and his victim. We turn away from them to other sonnets—to forget aught in Mr. Wordsworth's poetry we must turn to his poetry: and however the greatest poets of our country—the Shakespeares, Spensers, Miltons--worked upon high sonnet-ground, not one opened over it such broad and pouring sluices of various thought, imagery, and emphatic eloquence as he has done.

The tender Palinodia is beyond

Petrarch:—

Though I beheld at first with blank surprise

This work, I now have gazed on it so long,

I see its truth with unreluctant eyes; O, my beloved! I have done thee wrong, Conscious of blessedness, but, whence it springs

Ever too heedless, as I now perceive: Morn into noon did pass, noon into eve, And the old day was welcome as the

young, As welcome and as beautiful—in sooth More beautiful, as being a thing more

Thanks to thy virtues, to the eternal youth

Of all thy goodness, never melancholy; To thy large heart and humble mind, that cast

Into one vision, future, present, past! That "more beautiful" is most beautiful: all human love's cunning is in it, besides the full glorifying

smile of Christian love.

Last in the volume is the tragedy of "The Borderers," which, having lain for some fifty years" unregarded" among its author's papers,—a singular destiny for these printing days when our very morning-talk seems to fall naturally into pica type,—caused, in its announcement from afar, the most faithful disciples to tremble for the possible failure of their master. Perhaps they trembled with cause. The master, indeed, was a prophet of humanity; but he was wiser in love than terror, in admiration than pity, and rather intensely than actively human: capacious to embrace within himself the whole nature of things and beings, but not going out of

poet of one large sufficient soul, but not polypsychical like a dramatist. Therefore his disciples trembled: and we will not say that the tragedy, taken as a whole, does not justify the fear. There is something grand and Greek in the intention which hinges it, showing how crime makes crime in cursed generation, and how black hearts, like whiter ones (Topaze or Ebène), do cry out and struggle sympathy and brotherhood: granting that black heart (Oswald) may stand something too much on the extreme of evil to represent humanity broadly enough for a drama to turn upon. The action, too, although it does not, as might have been apprehended, lose itself in contemplation, has no unhesitating firm dramatic march-perhaps it "potters" a little. to take a word from Mrs. Butler ;-and when all is done we look vainly within us for an impression, the response to the unity of the whole. But, again, when all is done, the work is Mr. Wordsworth's, and the conceptions and utterances living and voiceful in it, bear no rare witness to the master. The old blind man, left to the ordeal of the desert—the daughter in agony hanging upon the murderer for consolation-knock against the heart, and take back answers; and ever and anon there are sweet gushings of such words as this poet only knows, showing how, in a "late remorse of love," he relapses into pastoral dreams, notwithstanding his new vocation, and within the very sight of the theatric thymele :-

A grove of darker and more lofty shade I never saw. The music of the birds Drops deadened from a roof so thick with leaves.

Who can overpass the image of the old innocent man praying?—

The name of daughter on his lips, he prays!
With nerves so steady, that the very flies
Sit unmolested on his staff.

But we come hastily to the moral

of our story,—seeing that Mr. Wordsworth's life does present a high moral to his generation, to forget which in his poetry would be an unworthy compliment to the latter. It is advantageous for us all, whether poets or poetasters, or talkers about either, to know what a true poet is, what his work is, and what his patience and successes must be, so as to raise the popular idea of these things, and either strengthen or put down the individual aspiration. Art," it was said long ago, "requires the whole man," and "Nobody," it was said later, "can be a_ poet who is anything else;" but the present idea of Art requires the segment of a man, and everybody who is anything at all is a poet in a parenthesis. And our shelves groan with little books over which their readers groan less metaphorically; there is a plague of poems in the land apart from poetry; and many poets who live and are true do not live by their truth, but hold back their full strength from Art because they do not reverence it fully; and all booksellers cry aloud and do not spare, that poetry will not sell; and certain critics utter melancholy frenzies, that poetry is worn out for everas if the morning-star was worn out from heaven, or "the yellow primrose" from the grass; and Mr. Disraeli the younger, like Bildad comforting Job, suggests that we may content ourselves for the future with a rhythmetic prose, printed like prose for decency, and supplied, for comfort, with a parish allowance of two or three rhymes to a paragraph. Should there be any whom such a "New Poor Law" would content, we are far from wishing to disturb the virtue of their serenity: let them continue, like the hypochondriac, to be very sure that they have lost their souls, inclusive of their poetic instincts. In the meantime the hopeful and believing will hope,trust on; and, better still, the Tennysons and the Brownings, and other high-gifted spirits, will work, wait on, until, as Mr. Horne has saidStrong deeds awake
And, clamouring, throng the portals of
the hour.

It is well for them and all to count the cost of this life of a master in poetry. and learn from it what a true poet's crown is worth; to recall both the long life's work for its sake—the work of observation, of meditation, of reaching past models into nature, of reaching past nature unto God; and the early life's loss for its sakethe loss of the popular cheer, of the critical assent, and of the "money in the purse." It is well and full of exultation to remember now what a silent, blameless, heroic life of poetic duty this man has lived :how he never cried rudely against the world because he was excluded for a time from the parsley garlands of its popularity; nor sinned morally because he was sinned against intellectually; nor, being tempted and threatened by paymaster and re-viewer, swerved from the righteous-

ness and high aims of his inexorable genius. And it cannot be ill to conclude by enforcing a high example by some noble precepts which, taken from the "Musophilus" of old Daniel, do contain, to our mind, the very code of chivalry for poets:—Be it that my unseasonable song

Come out of Time, that fault is in the

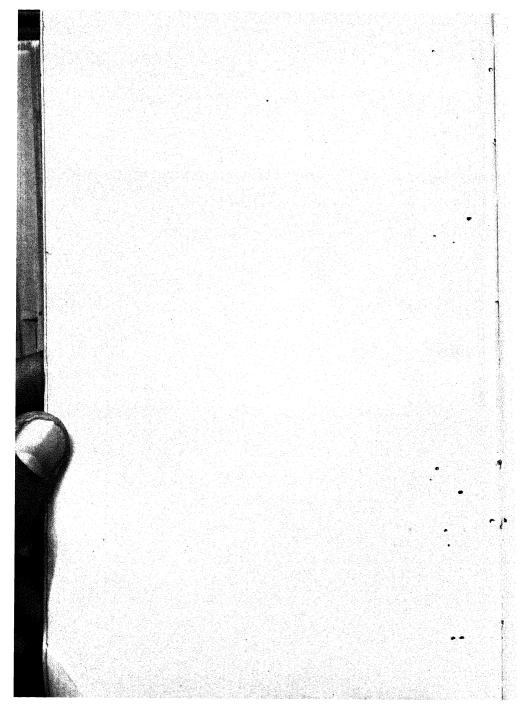
And I must not do virtue so much wrong As love her aught the worse for others' crime.

And for my part, if only one allow The care my labouring spirits take in this,

He is to me a theatre large enow, And his applause only sufficient is— All my respect is bent but to his brow; That is my all, and all I am is his. And if some worthy spirits be pleased

too,
It shall more comfort breed, but not more will,

BUT WHAT IF NONE? It cannot yet undo The love I bear unto this holy skill: This is the thing that I was born to do, This is my scene, this part must I julil.



INDEX TO FIRST LINES

PAGE	PAGE
A far harp swept the sea above . 69	Bettine, friend of Goethe 125
A heavy heart, Belovèd, have I	But now to higher themes! no
borne , 302	more confin'd 15
A knight of gallant deeds 189	But only three in all God's universe 297
A mighty dog with three colossal	But sovran Jove's rapacious Bird,
necks 573 A poet could not sleep aright 213	the regal 573
A poet could not sleep aright 213	"But why do you go?" said the
A rose once grew within 254	lady, while both sat under the
A sad man on a summer day 126	yew 544
A Thought lay like a flower upon	길이 되는 사람이 있는 사이에서 보고 있을 것이 없었다.
mine heart	Can it be right to give what I can
Accuse me not, beseech thee, that I	give? 299
wear 300	Child of the sunny lockes and beau-
Amidst the days of pleasant mirth 31	china of the banny rother and boat
All are not taken; there are left	Children of our England! stand . 75
behind	Could ye be very blest in hearkening 136
And Jove's right hand approached	Could ye be very blest in hearkening 130
the ambrosial bowl 574	
And, O beloved voices, upon which 185	Daughter of Spain: a passer by 35
And Psyche brought to Venus what	Dead: One of them shot by the
was sent	sea in the east 565
And so an easier life our Cyclops	
drew	Dear my friend and fellow-student,
And so these daughters fair of Pan-	1 Would lean my spirit our your 203
darus	Did ye ever sit on summer noon . 38
And therefore if to love can be desert 290	Do he near the cundren weeking, o
And wilt thou have me fashion into	my brothers
•speech 290	"Do you think of me as I think of
And yet, because thou overcomest	1 vou
so 300	Dost thou weep, mourning mother. 201
	지하는 일이 많은 일이 나는 것은 사람들은 점하는 사람들이 되었다. 나를 다 되었다.
Back-looking Memory 120	Each creature holds an insular point
Beauty, who softly walkest all thy	in space
days	Emperor, Emperor! 527
Because thou hast the power and	Enough! we're tired, my heart and
own'st the grace 30	[I 551
Because ye have broken your own	Eve is a twofold mystery · · · 93
chain 54	Experience, like a pale musician,
Beloved friend, who living many	holds
years	
Beloved, my Beloved, when I think 30	Tace to face in my chamber, my
Polyard thou hast brought me	silent chamber, I saw her 287
mont flowers	7 Fair Amy of the terraced house . 550
many nowers 30	41000

PAGE	PAGE
Farewell!—a word that human lips	I classed, appraising once 259
bestow 70	I count the dismal time by months
Fast this Life of mine was dying . 291	and wears 189
First time he kissed me, he but only	I dwell amid the city ever 114
kissed 306	I had a dream !my spirit was un-
Five months ago the stream did flow 294	bound 30
Florence, Bologna, Parma, Modena 538	I have a name a little name 140
For ever, since my childish looks . 70	I have a smiling face, she said . 250
Free Heart, that singest to-day . 251	I have been in the meadows all the
Friends of faces unknown and a	day
land 561	T have looked my last on my native
land :	l land 37
Go from me. Yet I feel that I shall	I heard an angel speak last night 540
r+ond 208	I heard last night a little child go
Go, sit upon the lofty hill	cinging 308
Go, travel 'mid the hills! The sum-	I lift my heavy heart up solemnly 298
mer's hand 63	I lived with visions for my company 303
mer's hand 63 God be with thee, my beloved,—	I love thee, love thee, Giulio 563
God be with thee! 202	I may sing; but minstrel's singing 134
God named Love, whose fount I nou	I mind me in the days departed . 113
art	I mourn for Adonis—Adonis is dead 211
God the Creator, with a pulseless	I never gave a lock of hair away . 301
hand	I plant a tree whose leaf 99
God who with thunders and great	I see thine image through my tears
voices kept	to-night 304
Cod would not let the spheric lights	I Stand by the liver where both as
accost	stood · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
Gods of Hellas, gods of Hellas 272	I stand on the mark beside the shore 277
Grief sate upon a rock and sighed	
one day 290	less 184
	1 11111111 411 1111
He bent his head upon his breast . 561	their hearts 306
He dwelt alone, and, sun and moon 96	1 think of thee my thoughts as
He listened at the porch that day . 293	twine and bud
He mas, and is not! Græcia's	I think that look of childs made
trembling shore 32 Hearken, hearken!	seem to say
Hearken, hearken!	I think we are too ready with complaint
Her azure eyes, dark lashes hold in	pianit Theory Theory tys had
fee	sung
Her hair was tawny with gold, her	- " '- Lam on I con her 207
eyes with purple were dark 53	I will write down thy name, and
Her soul was bred by a throne, and	1 Will Write down thy hame, and
fed 56	when 'tis writ
How beautiful is earth! my starry	
thoughts 6	
How do I love thee? Let me count	Milow 1 11 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 2 1 2 1 2 2 2 2 2
the ways 30	o If I leave all for thee, wilt thou
How he sleepeth, having drunken 24	O II I leave all for thee, was thee
How high Thou art! our songs can	exchange
own	
How joyously the young sea-mew . 12	7 If old Bacchus were the speaker . 20
How weak the gods of this world are 7	nought 30
	Trime of the Howard P
I am listening here in Rome 54	
I am no trumpet, but a reed 29	19 m me mmm • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •

PAGE	PAGE
In death-sheets lieth Rosalind . 96	Now, by the verdure on thy thou-
In the pleasant orchard-closes 234	sand hills
In the ranks of the Austrian you	" Now give us lands where the olives
found him 560	grow" 568
Indeed this very love which is my boast	화물통하다 중요한 아이를 하고 그리는 나가를 다려
boast	"O Dreary life," we cry, "O dreary
Is it indeed so? If I lay here	life!"
dead 302	life!"
It is a place where poets crowned	O Rose, who dares to name thee?. 292
may feel the heart's decaying . 139	O Seraph, pause no more! 78
	O thou fierce God of armies, Mars
King of us all, we cried to thee, cried	the red
to thee 556	Observe how it will be at last 558
	Of all the thoughts of God that are 130
Let the world's sharpness, like a	Of English blood, of Tuscan birth 295
clasping knife 302	Of writing many books there is no
Light human nature is too lightly	end 342
toet 187	Oh say not it is vain to weep
tost	Oh, wilt thou have my hand, Dear,
Love, Love, who once didst pass	to lie along in thine? 291
the Dardan portals 577	Oh, yes! they love through all this
Love me, Sweet, with all thou art 293	world of ours! 306
Loving friend, the gift of one 245	On the door you will not enter 265
Loving menu, the girt of one 245	"Onora, Onora!"—her mother is
Methinks we do as fretful children	Calling
do 285	Over the dumb Campagna-sea 562
Methought that I did stand upon a	Over the dumb campagna sea
tomb 35	이 도망하다 하는 것이 되어 되었다. 그렇게 되었다면 하다 하다.
Mine ears were deaf to melody 65	Pardon, oh, pardon, that my soul
Mine eyes are weary of surveying 77	should make 305
Mine is a wayward lay 33	Peace, peace, peace, do you say? . 556
Mountain gorses, ever-golden 272	Put the broidery-frame away 256
My dream is of an island place . III	
My Fancy's steps have often strayed 33	
My future will not copy fair my past 183	
"My future will not copy fair my	Said a people to a poet—"Go out
past." 286	from among us straightway!" . 234
My letters! all dead paper, mute	Say over again, and yet once over
and white! 303	
My little doves have left a nest . 130	Seven maidens 'neath the midnight 108
My little son, my Florentine 53:	She has laughed as softly as if she
My lonely chamber next the sea . 249	sighed 292
My midnight lamp is weary as my	She rushed to meet him: the nurse
soul	following 577
, My own Beloved, who hast lifted me 30	3 She was not as pretty as women I
My poet, thou canst touch on all	know 548
the notes 30	Since Spirit first inspir'd, pervaded
	all
Name not his name, or look afar . 3	
Napoleon!—years ago, and that	Sleep, little babe, on my knee 54:
oreat word	
great word 24 Nay, if I had come back so 55	2 Sleep, sleep, mine Holy One! 12
Neath my moon what doest thou. II	9 So the storms bore the daughters
Nine years old! The first of any . 27	
THE years out . The mat of any . 2/	선내용은 프랑과 대통기적으로 하지 않는 사람들은 그는 것은 하는 환분하였다.

		나일동안의 이렇게 함께 그렇게 사용하여 되었다.	
	AGE		AGE
Speak low to me, my Saviour, low	_0.	"There is no God" the foolish	
and sweet		saith	253
Sweet, thou hast trod on a heart.	543		
		one above thee	
Teresa, ah, Teresita!	563	They say Ideal beauty corner enter	
Thank God, bless God, all ye who	3-3	They say Ideal beauty cannot enter They say that God lives very high	
	184	They spoke unto me from the silent	290
The book thou givest, dear as such			60
The cypress stood up like a church		Thou! art thou like to God?	75
The Earth is old		Thou bay-crowned living One that	
The face of all the world is changed,		o'er the bay-crowned Dead art	
I think	298	bowing	TOS.
The face which, duly as the sun	553	Thou comest! all is said without a	120
The first time that the sun rose on		word	204
thine oath	304	Thou hast thy calling to some pal-	304
The forest made my home—the		그렇게	207
voiceful streams	59	Thou indeed, little Swallow	580
The gentle River, in her Cupid's		Thou large-brained woman and	3.0
honour	572	large-hearted man	188
The golden-hairèd Bacchus did		Three gifts the Dying left me,-	
espouse	577	Æschylus	286
The poet hath the child's sight in		To rest the weary nurse has gone	102
	284	To the belfry, one by one, went the	
The poet open'd his bolted door.	98	ringers from the sun	226
The poet's vow was inly sworn .		To weep awhile beside the bier .	74
The Pope on Christmas Day	537	True genius, but true woman! dost	
The room was darken'd; but a wan		deny	189
lamp shed	72	Two sayings of the Holy Scriptures	
The Saviour looked on Peter. Ay,	0.0	beat	185
no word	180	요. 그냥 있는 노립 . 큰 20일 중요 하다.	
The seraph sings before the manifest		Unlike are we, unlike, O princely	
The shadow of her face upon the wall		Heart!	207
The ship went on with solemn face			29/
The shroud is yet unspread	135		
The simple goatherd between Alp	.0.	Victoire! I knew thee in thy land.	73
and sky	204		
	207	We are borne into life—it is sweet,	
chandise	301	it is strange	262
for me	T45	We cannot live, except thus mutu-	200
The wind sounds only in opposing	*#3	ally	285
straits	277	We overstate the ills of life, and take	
The woman singeth at her spinning-	~//	We reach the utmost limit of the	100
wheel	186	earth	39
Then Bacchus' subtle speech her		We sow the glebe, we reap the corn	
sorrow crossed	576	We walked beside the sea	127
Then Jove commanded the god		Weep, as if you thought of laugh-	
Mercury	574	[발발생동 전 기기 교육 - 이 시간 사람들은 사람들이 되는 경우를 받는 것이라고 있다고 있다. (1982년) 다른	36
Then mother Ceres from afar be-		What are we set on earth for? Say,	
held her	572	to toil	185
Then Psyche entered in to Proserpine	574	What can I give thee back, O liberal	298
Then Psyche, weak in body and		What's the best thing in the world?	
soul, put on		What shall we add now? He is	
There is a silence upon the Ocean	34		559
나는 이다는 사람이 이러를 받아 보다 하나 가게 하면 하다.	Maria y	기가 들어가 하는 가지 하지 않다 나이지를 내고 있었다.	

PAGE	PAGE
What time I lay these rhymes anear	When ye stood up in the house . 247
thy feet 137	Which is the weakest thing of all . 140
What was he doing, the great god	While Psyche wept upon the rock
Pan 555	forsaken 571
When Bacchus first beheld the	
desolate 575	
When from thee, weeping I removed 133	
When I attain to utter forth in	answer thee 305
verse 189	
When Jesus' friend had ceased to be 138	the cloud
When last before her people's face	집합사용화 중에 돌아가 그런 그래요 그렇게 하다
her own fair face she bent 241	
When our two souls stand up erect	me hear 304
and strong 302	"Yes," I answered you last night 234
When my last song was said for thee 73	
When some beloved voice that was	
—to you	
When some Beloveds, 'neath whose	You love all, you say 550
eyelids lay 136	You remember down at Plorence
When Victor Emanuel the King . 557	our Cascine
When we met first and loved, I did	You see this dog; it was but yes-
not build • • • • • 305	terday • • • • • • 270

